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OUR LADY'S LITTLE LIBRARY SERIES

Convent of
The Maternal Heart of Mary

The Path of Mary

"All for Mary"; hence "All for Jesus"

SIXTH EDITION

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+ EDUARDUS,

EPISCOPUS NOTTINGHAMIENSIS.

Die 15 Aug., 1878.

LETTER FROM HIS LORDSHIP THE
BISHOP OF NOTTINGHAM.

“Having read several times with much pleasure and satisfaction the little work entitled ‘The Path of Mary,’ we heartily recommend it to the Faithful of our Diocese. It appears to us to be a faithful and devout exposition of the ‘True Devotion to the Holy Virgin’ of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort, a devotion which has received the sanction of the Church, and which is full of spiritual graces.

+ “EDWARD, Bishop of Nottingham.

“June 24, 1878.”

ON TRUE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

“He that can find another point of view from which our dear Lady seems greater than before has got a new means of sanctification; for he has acquired a new power of loving God.* Who does not long, and in these days more than ever, for that special devotion to the Holy Ghost which was the great characteristic of these three saints, so like each other, St. Philip Neri, Ven. Grignon de Montfort, and in our own days John B. Vianny, cure d’Ars? It is particularly a devotion for the later ages of the Church, and will grow with that *sublime* augmentation of devotion to our Blessed Lady which the prophecies and revelations of holy men and women have announced as the characteristic of the last saints who shall precede the doom, and be

* “See particularly Grignon de Montfort’s True Devotion to Our Lady, on which in these times too much stress cannot be laid. He was a new apostle of Mary.”

to the end of the Church what the apostles were to the beginning.

“Devotions follow the different lives of Our Lord; His life in the womb . . . His Mother is a perfect world of devotions, with her various mysteries, and ministries, and offices, and graces, and endurances, and identifications with Himself. The apostolate of Grignon de Montfort and his *remarkable book* promises to be the authentic opening of that *peculiar devotion to Mary* which is to be the characteristic grandeur of the later ages of the Church. It is our firm belief that hereafter we shall learn in heaven that of a truth Mary’s grandeurs are such as could not safely be taught on earth because of our infirmities. No province of theology will have to widen itself so much as that which speaks of her. In her marvels she will be as new to the saints who have loved her most as the Vision of Bliss itself will be. Even on earth the last ages of the Church are to have a knowledge of her which would amaze and oppress us now.”—*Dr. Faber.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW AMERICAN EDITION

Every faithful Catholic cherishes devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The Church, in her sacred liturgy, which is the official, vocal expression of her faith, presents Mary to her children as a God-given anchor of hope. It is the realization of this fact that, in introducing this little book to the Catholics of America where it is comparatively little known, the writer entertains the earnest trust that he or she, into whose hands it falls, will not lightly lay it aside, under the impression that it is merely another of the innumerable booklets about Mary with which they are so familiar.

This little volume—"The Path of Mary"—is not a book of mere pious practices in honor of the Blessed Virgin, it is rather a little treatise, bearing a sublime message. The message does not pretend to be either new or original, yet, in a very true sense,

just as a beautiful blossom or a luscious fruit, relative to the seed and plant which produces it may truly be called new, the "Path of Mary" is both new, and delightfully original.

Much depends upon the motive which prompts one to read a book of this kind. Particularly when it lays claim to more than the common run of devotional treatises. For the theological accuracy of "The Path of Mary," we make no apology. We are far more anxious that souls read it from the motive expressed in the Epistle of the Mass for the Vigil of the Assumption: "Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits. . . . They that eat me shall yet hunger: and they that drink me, shall yet thirst." Such souls, anxious to strengthen and deepen their faith, hope and love for Mary, will read this little book with a prayerful heart, and, like many others, they will find it full of sweet unction, profound spiritual instruction, and wonderfully practical.

The Path of Mary may be styled the first-born child of Father Faber's trans-

lation of Blessed Grignon DeMontfort's Treatise "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin." It was first published in 1878, under the jealous scrutiny of Bishop Bagshawe, at that time, Bishop of Nottingham, England, who constituted himself censor and sponsor for all the productions from the pen of its Authoress, Mother Mary, Foundress of *The Little Company of Mary*, a congregation of sisters whose life-work is the nursing of the sick, and especially the helping of the dying to depart from this world in the peace and friendship of God. The members of this congregation, because of their loving, spontaneous "Consecration of themselves to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom by the hands of Mary," according to Blessed DeMontfort's system of "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," rejoice in the title of "Mary's Own," and *The Path of Mary* may be said to show forth the peculiar spirit of the religious of the congregation. The book itself, however, was not written precisely for religious, it was written for all those who claim the title of true "Children of Mary." As genuine devo-

tion to Mary is the common Christian heritage of all, all are invited to enter upon this "Path." *The Path of Mary*, like the Church itself, is thoroughly Catholic. By *Catholic* I mean, not only that it flows from the teaching of divine faith, but because it is open to all the faithful, no matter what particular state or station, by God's providence they may be placed in. *The Path of Mary* is a *spiritual* path, leading straight, quickly and surely to Jesus Christ. The *pass-word* is a heaven-given one, spelling the whole reason of Catholic devotion to Mary: "Hail Mary, *full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*" Those who by the gift of unadulterated Catholic faith, hope and love for Mary, the test of which consists in spontaneously making the "Act of consecration" contained in "True Devotion" by the Blessed DeMontfort, may truly exclaim: "All good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches at her hands." It is the common teaching of all the saints, doctors and Fathers of the Church with St. Ambrose that: "Mary is a certain armor of salva-

tion, which God gives to those whom He wills to be saved." Truly, then, may all those who, by their loving consecration, compel Mary—so to speak—to fulfill the office of Mistress, exclaim with St. Elizabeth: "Whence is it to me that the Mother of my God should come to me!" The Church herself calls Mary the "Gate of Heaven," and we have no reason to believe that Heaven has more than one gate. St. Augustin, the spiritual son of St. Ambrose, is merely echoing the cry of the Church in all ages when he exclaims: "O Virgo gloriosa, a cunctis magnificaris, quia in te, et per te, et de te, quidquid boni accepimus et recepturi sumus, per te recipere vere cognoscimus—O glorious Virgin, thou art magnified by all, because in thee, through thee, and from thee, whatever of good we have received or shall receive, we know truly that we receive it through thee!"

It has been said that *The Path of Mary* may be, in a very true sense, called new and original. This is quite true, for it reveals the soul of its Authoress, and those

who are competent to judge will find in its few modest pages a living odor of the spiritual blossoms and fruits, peculiar to DeMontfort's system of "True Devotion," that may only exhale from the mind and heart of one who has "tasted and seen."

Just as Jesus, after He had delivered His divine message, exclaimed: "He that hath ears to hear let him hear!", so also, does the present writer close this poorly expressed "Introduction" with the words placed at the end of Blessed DeMontfort's Treatise "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," of which *The Path of Mary* is the true child: "Qui potest capere capiat: Quis sapiens et intelliget haec?—Let him who can receive it receive it: Who is wise and shall understand these things?"

"God alone."

A Secular "Priest of Mary."

INTRODUCTION

The little book, which now presents itself to the pious reader, is characterised by a devotion, so tender and simple that it seems as if it were inspired by our Blessed Lady, to draw faithful souls along the road of Christian Perfection, and which is comprised in the sentence, that the Interior life of Mary was in no way a forced effort, (as is the case with not a few souls who fatigue themselves in striving after sanctity) but was, on the contrary, marvellously simple and tranquil. In like manner this little book, composed by a soul, entirely devoted to Mary, flows sweetly along, as it were, like a river of milk, to nourish all souls desirous of peace and their spiritual welfare. However, it does not disguise the obstacles and difficulties that too often befall one in the practice of virtue, neither does it pretend to trace out a new system of the Ascetic life, it only presents, under a new aspect, and in a sweetly attractive

form, what Saints have already taught and practised, regarding this most important subject.

Without exaggeration, one may assert that by means of this humble little book souls are drawn to God, by bringing into full relief, the special mission of Spiritual Motherhood, assigned to the Blessed Virgin, in the great work of the Redemption, a mission, filled with ineffable sweetness, and therefore likely to inspire the most unlimited confidence in its efficacy. The sublime saying of our Saviour, that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we must become as little children, finds a new application, in the complete abandonment of the Christian soul to Mary, by means of a new and marvellous sacrifice, for it is a sacrifice, entirely devoid of all sharpness and difficulty. What is there, in fact, more easy for a loving child than to confide in his own Mother, leaving her to direct and rule his every action?

This is why it may easily seem that these pages are inspired by Mary, in that, they contain such an affectionate and universal

appeal to an increased devotion to Her, and in a form so perfect and comprehensive, that it is truly worthy of the Maternal Heart of the Most Holy Virgin.

In these pages, Mary calls us all to Her, in order to lead us to Jesus, to make us live His Life, again, to make us forget, in Him, our sorrows and anxieties.

She speaks to us by means of this little book, proposing to us an easy and secure way of salvation, in which we all of every state and condition, may commence to walk, with jubilant souls, full of the joyful hope of arriving, under Her loving guidance, at the port of salvation.

This is the earnest wish of the authoress, rendered all the more ardent and pure, from her being a Religious in an Order consecrated specially to Mary.

Fiesole, Jan. 1st, 1903.

CAN. CHARLES FALCINI,

Prot. Ap. Vic. Gen.

The Path of Mary.

CHAPTER I.

We live in perilous times; we are surrounded by dangers and temptations almost unparalleled in the history of the world. The Church, the Spouse of Jesus, seems to have followed the life of her Lord, and to have exemplified in herself its various stages. There has been the hidden life of the early ages of the Church, followed by the more Public Life; then arose an increased devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, followed by the Agony in the Garden; and we seem to be now bordering on the times when the Church will mirage, will reflect, will, in fact, mystically reproduce the crucifixion of her Divine Head and Master. We may draw out this parallel more clearly by glancing at the rise of the Religious Orders which spring up from age to age in the Church, and whose members, as more

perfect members of the Church, are bound to represent more closely the life of Our Lord. We see the Hidden Life of Jesus in the Fathers of the Desert, and in the contemplatives of the early ages of the Church. They are followed by the more active Orders of the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits, who exemplified the Public Life of Our Lord, the time when "He went about preaching everywhere and doing good." Religious Orders followed devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. Convents arose, whose inmates night and day watch before the adorable Mystery of the Altar, praising and thanking Jesus for this His greatest Invention of Love. The last Order established in our own times, and as yet but little known, is a strict, contemplative Order;* and its members consecrate themselves entirely to honour the Agony in the Garden.

* Since the first edition of "The Path of Mary" was published, "The Little Company of Mary" has been founded by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Nottingham. The special devotion of the sisters is Calvary, and the succour of the dying, both by prayers and personal attendance.

These Orders do not rise and fall; they but continue the Life of Our Lord; they make up His Body, the Church. Thus, as I have said, the Church appears to be reaching the time when she will be mystically crucified with her Lord. The powers of darkness are evidently allowed a strange *power* of temptation: "it is their hour." Even many of Our Lord's own have fallen away. Throughout the Church there is unusual distress of soul and body. You who read this may have thought your trials peculiar to yourself: but you are mistaken. Your neighbour suffers still more perhaps than you, though you know it not. He is sorely tempted and tried; and he, too, thinks his grief peculiar to himself. Well for those who are watching! well for those who are assiduous in obtaining the graces mother Church offers them. There will not be a grace too much given them, for "Satan will deceive, if possible, even the elect." Well for those who are watching! Morning and night we need the sweet voice of Jesus to repeat to us the warning words the loving anxiety of His

Heart prompted Him to utter: "Watch and pray." "Watch and pray." I do not write to alarm you: it is to forewarn you. You have wondered, perhaps, when you have heard of the falling away from the Church of even the very good. You have sorrowed, perhaps, over some sad instance, it may be in your own family or community, of some unhappy soul for whom the temptations of the age have been too strong. Yes, we have wondered at it. We are thoughtless and careless. We do not fear for others till we see them fall: but we are not wise. Did not our dear Lord "fear" for us? We should be wiser, if we did FEAR *more* and wonder *less*. "I never wonder at the fall of anyone" were the remarkable words I have had said to myself by one experienced, by one who had gone through numberless trials and temptations. We see that the Church is visibly afflicted, that the powers of hell are leagued more strongly than ever against her. We cannot but see it. It is visible to our eyes, but the interior conflict, the attacks of Satan against the individual soul, are not so

visible, though they are far fiercer and more disastrous than the open attacks made by the emissaries of Satan against the Church. The one is but a figure of the other. Why have I written this? *Forewarned* is *forearmed*. If you have intelligence of a threatened danger you will make preparations to defend yourself against it. Now you cannot wish for yourself any good (real good) that God does not wish for you: therefore His Divine Province has been beforehand, and provided you with a most powerful means of help. It would not be like God to allow us to be unusually tempted, to subject us to great conflicts, without likewise providing us with a far counterbalancing assistance.

It is not my present purpose to show this conduct of God through the history of the Church. I wish simply to put before you now the special assistance needed at the present time, to enable us to fight successfully the battle which, whether we will or not, we must engage in if we would be saved. What then must we do? What special assistance do we need? Before

answering I will ask you a question. At the time of the Passion of Our Lord,—that most fearful time of the dominion of Satan, when he was allowed a power he will never be allowed again (though, as I have said, in the Church has already commenced that season of persecution, trial and temptation, in which she will in herself represent again the Passion of Our Lord)—at that memorable time, who, I ask you, were the faithful ones that continued with Our Lord to the end? In that time of general temptation, when even Peter denied the Master he loved so well, who were the happy ones (blessed with a special happiness for all eternity for their faithfulness in that terrible hour), who did not abandon their Lord when He for their sakes was seemingly abandoned even by His Heavenly Father? Who hoped and trusted in Him when others despaired? Who, though weeping, adored, whilst the world around scoffed and mocked? Who were they, and whence had they the strength to stand when others fell? Who were they? Weigh well the answer. *Those who remained in*

the company of Mary. Whence had they this great grace? From her all-powerful intercession. As it was *then* so will it be *again*: and it will be well for us to think of this earnestly, seriously; not carelessly, but with thought and prayer. You will say: But have we not already great devotion to our Lady? Do we not all love her? Again, before answering, I will question you. Had not St. Peter devotion to our Lady? Did he not love her, as likewise the other apostles? Yes, O yes; but St. John, who had learnt from the Heart of his Master, the love most pleasing to It, also learnt the devotion most pleasing to the Maternal Heart of Mary, the devotion most efficacious to himself. It was a child's devotion to its mother. On the cross Our Lord but proclaimed and cemented what had been before. Therefore, in the time of trial St. John sought the company of his Mother, according to the revelations of the Saints, returning to her house broken-hearted with the account of what had happened to Jesus. It was in her company that St. John and the holy women walked the weary way to Calvary.

Still you may reply, devotion to Mary is no new assistance, no new devotion in the Church: it has ever been. True; but, like the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the devotion to our Blessed Lady that God (to use the words of Father Faber) is now pressing for, was a devotion known and practised to the full by Saints: and those in all future ages who enter this "Path of Mary" and continue therein will be saints, and eminent ones, too. What then is this seemingly new devotion? you naturally ask, and the answer may be given in few words. *It is the devotion practised by Our Lord Himself.* All who are serving God in His holy Church have devotion to our Blessed Lady. There can be no doubt upon that point: but it is not such as God would have it to be. The revelations of the Saints and the writings of holy men both declare that it is God's Wish and Will for a vast increase of devotion amongst His people to His holy and Immaculate Mother; (to use again the words of Father Faber) "a greater, wider, stronger, quite another devotion." The Eternal Father, speaking from His high

throne, said of Jesus, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Our Lord Himself speaks to us to the end of time, saying: "I have given you an example, that as I have done you should do also." What is the first thing of which Jesus gives us an example that we may follow and imitate? It is the very devotion that I am now asking you, if you love your own soul, if you love the souls of others, if you love to please our Lady, if you love to please and give glory to God, I am now asking you to adopt. To explain. In the Bosom of the Eternal Father, in the embrace of the Holy Spirit, the Word, the only Son of God, dwelt from all eternity in unutterable peace, tranquillity and blissful repose. From that haven of happiness and joy the Eternal Word looked upon, and loved above all His created works, the Immaculate Virgin Heart of Mary. The Son of God then gave Himself to Mary, and became Her Son. He, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, drew His Mortal Life, His Precious Blood, from the pure Heart of Mary, who, by the

power of the Holy Spirit, thenceforth shone with the double lustre of Virgin and Mother; and the Son of God, now Son of Mary too, lay tranquil and happy in her peaceful womb, depended wholly upon her, lived by every breath she drew. Here is example for us. Here is what I would have you to do. I would have you, after the example of Jesus, give yourself entirely to Mary. I would have you born again by her. I would have you make, after a fitting preparation for so solemn an act, and with the advice of those who guide you, make an entire consecration to her of *all the spiritual and temporal possessions* you now have, or may have in the future. It may be said, without the slightest hesitation, that if you thus, after the example of Jesus, give yourself to Mary, she will in return give you the power to give a new life to Jesus. He will be born and live within you, so that henceforth you may say: "I live now, not I, but it is Christ liveth in me." The Eternal Word will be spiritually conceived in you; therefore will God the Father, bending over you, encom-

pass you with jubilee, and pour forth upon you His Holy Spirit.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus, and was instructed by him in the new birth that must take place to enable a man to enter heaven, the regeneration, the new birth of Baptism, Nicodemus understood not the word that was spoken to him. You who understand that new spiritual birth may yet be like Nicodemus, and not understand what I now say, unless you beg the light of the Holy Spirit. I would have you renew your spiritual birth of Baptism, renew the vows you then made, and be born again in Mary. Make your vows with full consciousness of your own act, and thereby be born to a new life of grace and holiness by Mary. "Homo et homo natus est in ea." "This man and that man is born in her." In a remarkable French work, written by a devoted servant of God, some hundred years ago, a beautiful explanation may be found in these words. "According to the explanation of some of the Fathers, the first man that is born in Mary is the Man God, Jesus Christ; the second is a mere

man, the child of God and Mary by adoption. If Jesus Christ, the Head of men, is born in her, the predestinate, who are the members of that Head, ought also to be born in her by a necessary consequence. One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members, nor the members without the head: for this would be a monster of nature; so in like manner, in the order of grace, the Head and the members are born of one and the same Mother; and if a member of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is to say, one of the predestinate, was born of any other mother than Mary, who has produced the Head, he would be simply a monster in the order of grace. St. Augustine affirms that all the predestinate, in order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, are in the world hidden in the womb of the most holy Virgin, where they are guarded, nourished, brought up and made to grow by that great Mother until she has brought them forth to glory after death. God the Son wishes to form Himself, and, so to speak, to in-

carnate Himself every day, by His dear Mother, in His members.”

The devotion I am advocating, then, is a necessary consequence of this theological view. If our union with Mary is so close, by reason of our union with Jesus, let us correspond with the union thus formed by God Himself, and deliver ourselves to Mary, to depend upon her, and live by her spirit; that her thoughts and actions may influence us, as the thoughts and actions of a mother influence the child within her womb, influencing—as we know the mother’s dispositions do—the character of her child. This, then, is what I ask you to do: to be born again. To be born, not this time in sin, but in innocence: not unconsciously, as you were regenerated in the wonder-working Sacrament of Baptism; but of your own free will, renewing the grace of that heavenly birth, by consciously repeating your Baptismal vows, and adding thereto a *fourth vow or offering*, by which you deliver *your body and soul, your earthly possessions, your spiritual treasures of time and eternity, to Mary*. This is not

a light thing I ask you to do. If, by the light of God's Holy Spirit, you can see the beauty of this "Path of Mary," and enter it, you will not be surprised to find that, when I use the words "a new birth," I do not exaggerate. You will hardly know yourself when, some time after, having advanced in the "Path of Mary," you look back at what you were when you entered it. To use the words of F. Faber, it will cause a "transformation" in your soul. Strengthened by the milk of Mary, the Mother of holy hope, you will find yourself walking with an entirely new spirit. So many graces are spread about this path, such wonderful assistances meet you at every step, that they seem more like the interpositions of Divine Providence that we read of in the Lives of the Saints; and, filled with the new spirit of love and liberty you have imbibed from Mary, you will find yourself walking buoyantly, singing "Magnificats" on your way, praising God "who has done such great things for you," wondering as you look back at your former life before you had entered into this "Im-

maculate Way of Mary," remembering how then you crept and dragged yourself with difficulty along; whereas now you rather run than walk, and, when tired, almost feel your mother's arms folding you to rest on her breast. May she invite you to enter where she is so powerful, where she is so mother-like, where we learn to love her more and more with the love of Jesus!

There are times in our life, when, touched by the grace of God, we sincerely desire to make a new beginning, to make a fresh start, to cast away the past and turn entirely to God. Behold, then, how can you better do so than by entering this Path of Mary, by beginning a new life in Mary? No matter what has been the past, no matter how sinful, by your new birth in Mary all will be forgotten and forgiven; for it is that sweet Mother's loving duty to daily wash the souls of her children from the stains of their sins by the salutary tears she bestows upon them—the tears of perfect contrition, the work of the Precious Blood. To Mary, "fount of life," the fair

fountain of the Precious Blood, is given the power to dispense the tears that purify the soul, and make it white as when the waters of baptism were first poured upon it. It is Mary's grand office to her children, a work the Immaculate Mother loves to do. She loves to wash her children in the Precious Blood of her Son by the tears of perfect contrition. The grace of perfect contrition is what all should desire and pray for. Mary knows well how beautiful it makes the soul, and therefore desires and obtains that all her children should possess this great grace. Mary's children are very happy in its possession. It fills them with a great peace, knowing, as they do, that it is one of the greatest signs they can have that they are in the grace of God. When, however, they are thus cleansed and purified, Mary knows well that her children have need of a covering before they present themselves before the All Holy God. What, then, does Mary do? She covers them with her own graces and virtues, and yet far more with the merits of her Son. Thus, as a holy man has said of

her, "All her domestics are clothed with double clothing." Again, Mary's children are happy, because they have learnt from the Immaculate Mother such a hatred of sin and its malice that, with fallen Adam, they would be ready to hide themselves from the Presence of God if they had but their own justice wherewith to present themselves before Him in Whose sight the heavens are not pure: but they are clothed with double clothing, the merits of Jesus and Mary. They are ever very humble in the knowledge of their own nothingness and sinfulness, remembering that what makes them pleasing to God is not their own dispositions and good works, for they see in the light of God's Truth how very mean and selfish are their ordinary thoughts and works, how insignificant their best dispositions when put by the side of the dispositions of Jesus and Mary.

This humility possessed by Mary's own is especially dear to God, and they are cherished and caressed by God as the spoilt children of His Love. Yes, they are the spoilt children of Divine Love; but, to use a para-

dox, God knows they cannot be spoilt. To explain. God, because He is God, desires to give. It is the nature of God to desire to give. Thus there are many souls on whom He longs to bestow His precious gifts and draw them nearer to Himself; but He knows that by doing so He would be doing them positive harm. They have not sufficient humility to receive great graces. They would think there must be something particularly pleasing in their nature to induce God thus to favour them. There would arise a vain complacency in themselves, and the graces bestowed upon them would be carelessly guarded and finally lost. With Mary's Own the case is very different. They are so settled in the knowledge of their own nothingness and unworthiness, that they are not anxious to think themselves worse than they are, as some mistaken though well-meaning people, who are striving to obtain this virtue, imagine they must do. No; Mary's Own know it is not possible to think themselves worse than they are. They see the general corruption of mankind, and know they are of the same sinful mass, and the sins committed in this

fallen world make them know themselves. Every fresh crime they hear perpetrated is for them a fresh increase of humility in the thought that, but for the grace of God, they would have committed the like.*

Seeing what human nature is capable of makes them know of what they themselves are capable; and when they think that God, the essential God, the essential Truth, sees, not only what is, but what under every possible circumstance would be, He must therefore see the sins that they themselves under like circumstances would have committed. With this thought they hide themselves in the dispositions of the Immaculate Mother, who is all fair in the sight of God, in whom He sees no spot, and they present themselves to Jesus under cover of Mary. They present themselves to the Eternal Father as Mary did (spotless and pure as she was herself), through the merits of Jesus. Thus, when they receive great gifts from God they attempt not to hide

* St. Augustine's own words were naturally suggested here to the reviser: "There is no sin or crime so great but what every Christian could commit were it not for the preventing grace of God."

from themselves that they have received such gifts, as the mistaken people I have mentioned seem to think they must do. No! "*they render to God the things that are God's.*" They turn to Mary with the "*talent*" entrusted to them. They know they will have to give an account of it; and they know likewise that of themselves they would probably spoil God's gift, make bad use of it, or perhaps lose it altogether; but, having given all that they shall ever possess to Mary, they trust to her to show them how to use it; they deliver it to her keeping, who is named by the saints "*the Treasure of the Lord.*"

To copy from the French book of the Venerable Grignon de Montfort, I have before mentioned: "This great God has a most rich treasury, in which he has laid up all that He has of beauty, of splendour, of rarity, of preciousness, even to His own Son, and this immense treasury is none other than Mary." God then gives His greatest gifts to Mary's own, because they give them to her, and He knows in her hands they will not be wasted. He gives

them to Mary's Own, because He knows they will not attribute anything of His to themselves. In the midst of the greatest graces they remain simple and humble; they abide ever in truth. It is because of this humility, that is to say, this truthfulness, that they are so intensely loved by God. Thus despising themselves, Mary's Own seek the presence of Jesus, ever in the company of their Mother, feeling utterly unworthy to appear before Him in their own nakedness. They appear in His Presence, they speak to the Eternal Father as Mary did, as they learn from her to do likewise; they pray and worship God by Jesus in union with Mary. She, when on earth, would raise her pure spirit to its greatest height of love; and her act of love and adoration, great as it was, greater indeed than the love of seraphim, was not worship great enough for God. Mary knew this well, and from the moment of the Conception of Jesus in her womb her worship was lost in the worship Jesus offered His Eternal Father. Her own adoration sank into insignificance by the side of His supreme

worship, the most perfect adoration then for the first time offered to the Majesty of the Ever Blessed Trinity. This was Mary's constant practice. When Jesus was born their mortal lives separated, but the union of soul never did. What the Holy Spirit of God had joined together nothing ever sundered.

CHAPTER II.

From what has been said you may have gained a new insight into the effect produced in the soul that delivers itself to Mary in the way I have advocated. The soul has towards Jesus the love, the devotion of Mary, and lives but for Him, as she did. Towards Mary the soul turns with the love of Jesus, with His own devotion to His ever Blessed Mother. With this mingled double feeling the soul offers sweet incense and purest praise before the throne of the Most High, renewing on this earth again the life of love and worship of Jesus and Mary. Perhaps you still do not understand what I mean. You probably will not until you have entered this "Path of Mary," which I ask you to do in a child-like spirit, trusting to the authority of holy and learned people, whose opinion upon this devotion I shall give farther on, so that, though you enter this path simply, you do not do so blindly. What will be

your nourishment in the Path of Mary? What will be the food your tender Mother will give you? What could it be but the "Bread of Life," formed of her substance, the Blessed Sacrament, given to us by God through Mary, to feed and nourish our souls that we may live by It? This will be your Daily Bread. Not that I mean you will receive the Blessed Sacrament every day. That matter rests with individual souls: but still I repeat, the Blessed Sacrament will be your daily food, for daily, aye, and hourly, will Mary nourish you by spiritual communion, the grandest grace she can give you after Sacramental Communion. So great is spiritual communion, so beneficial to the soul, so pleasing to our Lord (who wishes us to take our life from Him as the body takes its life from the soul that animates it), that He showed in vision to a saint her Sacramental Communion kept in a vessel of gold, and her spiritual communions kept in a vessel of silver. Thus the child of Mary neglects not this great grace. Mary's Own are taught by her how constantly to increase

their spiritual strength. There are numbers in the world who allow their souls to wither and their days to decline as a shadow, because they forget to eat their bread: but not so Mary's Own. As the child hungers for its mother's breast, the child of Mary turns at all times to her for its life and nourishment. O Mary, Mother! thou art to us as the Breasts of God, from which we suck unutterable sweetness. Mother-like is our good God in His Love, feeding us with His own Substance. Through Mary, Jesus our Life first came to us. Through Mary He still loves to give Himself. Those who live in union with Mary have their thoughts naturally upon the Blessed Sacrament. It could not be otherwise. The Blessed Sacrament is Jesus. Were Mary's thoughts ever away from Jesus? Mary's Own, therefore, think and live by Him, and constantly turn to Him to receive fresh strength; and they know well that our dear Lord is more anxious to feed them than they are anxious for this heavenly food.

In temptations they turn immediately to

receive spiritually this Food, and without waiting to dispute with the temptation, whatever it may be, they throw themselves into the arms of Mary, and reclining on her bosom, ask for the Fruit of her womb, and repeat to themselves: "May the Body of my Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to everlasting life"; or they repeat the words: "*Corpus Domini Nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam æternam. Amen*"; as though our Lady were herself speaking to them and giving the Blessed Sacrament to them; and thus they are strong for whatever conflict they have to fight. They have received a grace the most powerful they could receive after the grace of a Sacrament; and thus, like a child weaned from the pleasures of earth, they rest on their mother's lap, and it is on that lap all good things come to them. There it is they praise God for the great things He has done for them; there, saying with St. Ambrose, "Let the soul of Mary be in each of us to glorify the Lord: let the spirit of Mary be in each of us to rejoice in God"; they repeat the sublimest

canticle of praise that is known upon earth, the inspired words uttered from the spotless Heart of Mary, the beautiful song sung with such transport in thanksgiving to the loving God Who created her, that before the hymns of angels it ascended to the throne of the Most Holy, Bright, and Peaceful Trinity, giving unspeakable joy that the song of angels never yet had given. With the exception of the soul of our dear Lord, no soul has ever experienced such joy as the soul of Mary. Mary's Own enter into the joy of their Mother, and praise God with her spirit. They are the happiest souls on earth, though they may have crosses that would break a less strong spirit than the one they have obtained from Mary: but they have been strengthened by her with the Bread of the strong in an especial manner, and the hour of trial finds them prepared, and trusting in her maternal care, so that they walk safely through dangerous places; or rather they feel carried, secure as a child feels in its mother's arms, even if she were to carry it into the midst of a raging battle.

They who thus rest in Mary have continued peace. "Think not," says the Abbot Guerie, "that it is happier to dwell in Abraham's bosom than in Mary's; for it is in this last that Our Lord has placed His throne." Another of the maternal offices of Mary is to place her Own in the position in which they may most glorify God. If they know not what their vocation is they trouble not at that, but wait patiently God's time to make it known to them. They are quite sure they have fulfilled God's Will by entering the Path of Mary, and, in imitation of Jesus, remain quietly in subjection to Mary. "And He was subject to them." Having the wonderful example of Our Lord remaining thirty years in retirement with Mary before commencing the grand work of founding His Church, they copy Jesus, and remain in retirement with her until God calls them to some particular state in life, or to do some particular work for Him; and, as the writings of holy people show us, when people have a wonderful increased devotion to our Lady, the Holy Spirit, who by her pro-

duced His greatest work, a God-Man, Jesus Christ, will likewise produce by her greater saints than have ever been, who will do startling wonders for God and His Church; saints who will greatly glorify God, and be devoted to the work of saving souls, and who, by the means Mary will point out to them, will be most instrumental in the sublimest of works, namely, the salvation of souls. Whatever may be the work appointed to them, its value is marvelously increased by having been done in union with Mary, and offered through her, according to St. Bernard: "When you want to offer anything to God, take care to offer it by the most agreeable and worthy hands of Mary, unless you wish to have it rejected." Thus, as Our Lord gave as great glory to His Heavenly Father by remaining hidden, doing simply every-day actions in the company of Mary, as by working His greatest marvels; so with those who live and work in the company of Mary, in doing their ordinary simple duties they give glory to God, they do good to the souls of others far above those who work

by themselves. The offerings of these latter are often rejected by God, as He rejected the sacrifices of the Jews of old, when He would not accept what they offered Him on account of the selfishness with which they offered them, because they sought their own will in what they did; whereas they, who, by one grand oblation of themselves to Mary, have entirely abandoned their own will, feel assured that their actions, prayers, and sacrifices, must be pleasing and acceptable to God, since, being at the disposal of Mary, they are sure to be disposed to His greatest honour and glory; in fact, of so great value do they become when thus divested of self-will, or even self-interest, that a holy man does not scruple to say, that "those who practice this devotion, and have thus abandoned themselves to our *many years*." He gives his reasons thus: "1. *by any other practice, however difficult in many years*." He gives his reasons thus: "1. Because, doing your actions by our Blessed Lady, as this practice teaches, you abandon your own intentions and operations, although

good and known, to lose yourself, so to speak, in the intentions of the Blessed Virgin, although they are unknown. Thus you enter by participation into the sublimity of her intentions, which are so pure that she gives more glory to God by the least of her actions—for example, in twirling her distaff, or pointing her needle—than St. Lawrence by his cruel martyrdom on his grid-iron, or even all the saints by all their heroic actions put together. 2. Because the soul, in this practice, counts as nothing whatever it thinks or does of itself, and only puts its trust and takes its pleasure in the dispositions of Mary when it approaches Jesus or even speaks to Him. Thus it practices humility far more than the souls who act of themselves, and lean, with however imperceptible a complacency, on their own dispositions. But if the soul acts more humbly, it therefore glorifies God more highly; and He is only perfectly glorified by the humble, and those that are little and lowly in heart. 3. Because our Blessed Lady, wishing by her great charity to receive the present of our actions in her vir-

ginal hands, gives them an admirable beauty and splendour. Our Lord is thus more glorified by them than if we offered them by our own criminal hands. 4. Because you never think of Mary without Mary in your place thinking of God. St. Elizabeth praised Mary and called her blessed. Mary, the faithful echo of God, at once intoned: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum." "My soul doth magnify the Lord." To those who truly love God the thought that all they do is entirely devoted to His greatest honour and glory is a very happy thought. Moreover, they are doing the most they can for the good of their neighbour, by giving to our Lady all they *can give** of their spiritual goods, to be disposed as she pleases for the good of others. Besides, by the practice of this devotion, loving God above all things and their neighbour as themselves, those who have thus disposed of all their good works and prayers to our Lady benefit themselves in another way. To give

* It must be remembered this devotion is only made according to our present or future state of life, and does not hinder a priest, for instance, applying his Mass to some private person.

an example. We often commence some good work with a companion whom we may think intended by God to assist us; consequently we pray most earnestly for this companion, and beg graces, etc., for him. If we have given our prayers, etc., to our Lady, to dispose of as she pleases and to whom she pleases, when our companion fails us, as is so often the case, our Lady, *who knew all along how the case would be*, has taken care to give our prayers to the person intended by God to be associated with us in our undertaking.

To quote again from that devoted servant of our Lady, Grignon de Montfort, who seemed inspired by God to spread this devotion in France, that country so beloved and favoured by the Blessed Virgin; by the practice of this devotion "we do even more than is done in a religious order. In religious orders we give God the goods or fortune by the vow of poverty, the goods of the body by the vow of chastity, our own will by the vow of obedience, and sometimes the liberty of the body by the vow of cloister. But we do not by those vows give

Him the liberty or the right to dispose of the value of our good works; and we do not strip ourselves, as far as a Christian man can do, of that which is dearest and most precious to him, namely, the satisfaction and impetratory parts of his actions."

To conclude with the word of this saintly man, showing the value he set upon the devotion I am advocating. He speaks of it as a secret known to few, and writes: "As there are secrets of nature, to do in a short time, at little cost, and with facility, natural operations; so also, in like manner, there are secrets in the order of grace, to do in a short time, with sweetness and facility, supernatural operations, such as emptying ourselves of self, filling ourselves with God, and becoming perfect. As the essence of this devotion belongs to the interior, which it ought to form, it will not be equally comprehended by everybody. Some will enter into its inward spirit; but they will only mount one step. Who will mount to the second step? Who will get as far as the third? Lastly, who will advance so as to make this devotion his habitual state? He

alone to whom the spirit of Jesus shall have revealed the secret, the faultlessly faithful soul He shall conduct from grace to grace, from light to light, until he arrives at the transformation of himself into Jesus Christ, and to the plenitude of grace on earth and of glory in heaven." O! but my writing will have been well expended, if this little work, falling into the hands of a soul of good dispositions, a soul well born—born of God and of Mary, and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—should unfold to him and, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, should inspire him with the excellence and the price of true and solid devotion to our Blessed Lady. "If I knew that my guilty blood could serve in engraving upon any one's heart the truths which I am writing in honour of my true Mother and sovereign Mistress, I would use my blood instead of ink to form the letters."

These are the words of this devoted servant of Mary, written more than a century ago. May they sink into your hearts, dear readers, and bear the fruit desired so ear-

nestly by the saintly writer. May you be induced to adopt this devotion from pure love to Mary. If you knew how full her sweet Maternal Heart is with love for you, you would in return love her better. It is because you do not believe in that burning love, next in its intensity to Divine Love, that you are not yourself filled with an ardent desire of making some return. But those who do dearly love our holy Mother, and think they can never do enough to honour her whom the King delights to honour, behold the way they may succeed. Next to the possession of Himself, the greatest happiness God can give Mary is to give her the souls for whom Jesus shed His blood and died. Therefore, offer yourself to her; practice faithfully the devotion I have but poorly explained, which, as I have said, is *God's devotion to Mary*. Put yourself into the hands of Mary, as Jesus did, and by doing this you will be most perfectly imitating the conduct of God and corresponding with His Holy Will, the Will of His Holy Spirit, desiring again to make use of Mary to form copies of Jesus upon earth. Give

yourself to Mary, whose great Mother-Heart longs to possess you entirely, that you may be to her as another Jesus, and that she may perform to Him again—in performing them to you—the loving offices of His Infancy; yes, and of His whole life. Give yourself to Mary with all your goods and works; and by doing this you will fulfil the command of Our Lord, His great command: “And this is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends.” You will by this devotion fulfil this command; because you will have given your life into the hands of our Lady, to be disposed of for the greater glory of God and good of souls, so that you may be so entirely at her disposal that if the sacrifice of your life would save a soul, you are quite willing it should be sacrificed, and that Mary may offer you, as heretofore she did Jesus. And thus also, by this devotion, while you ensure the salvation of your own soul, you likewise ensure its sanctification, inasmuch as you present yourself a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God.

CHAPTER III.

In the writings of St. Augustine we find him telling us that all the predestinate, in order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, are in this world hidden in the womb of the most holy Virgin, where they are guarded, nourished, brought up, and made to grow by that good Mother, until she has brought them forth to glory after death, which is properly the day of their birth. Behold, then, the devotion I ask you to practice, viz.: to depend as a child does upon its mother, to lean and rely upon her; in short, to live by her. Jesus, our Head, put Himself wholly under her care, and lived by her, therefore we, His members, to follow Him perfectly, should put ourselves entirely into her care, and should live by her after His example. I will here remind you again of a quotation, from the sublime work of Grignon de Montfort, on the text of Scripture, "This man and that man is born in her." "Homo et homo natus est

in ea." The Fathers teach that the first man that is born in Mary is the Man-God Jesus Christ; the second is a mere man, the child of God and Mary by adoption. "If Jesus Christ the head of men is born in her, the predestinate, who are members of that Head, ought also to be born in her by a necessary consequence. One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members, nor the members without the head; for this would be a monster of nature. So in like manner, in the order of grace the head and the members are born of one and the same mother; and if a member of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ was born of any other mother than Mary, who has produced the Head, he would not be one of the predestinate, nor a member of Christ's Mystical Body, but simply a monster in the order of grace."

The devotion I am asking you to practice naturally follows from this truth. I ask you to make a voluntary offering of yourself to Mary, after the example of Jesus. Without interfering in the least

with your present or future state of life, I ask you to begin a *new life*, to be, as it were, born again; but in the offering I desire you to make still more is included than the ordinary link between mother and child, and the offering or oblation I desire you to make assumes more the form of a holocaust.

In this likewise Jesus has given us an example. To explain. Mary is not only the one perfect mother placed in creation by God as the beautiful exemplar of all motherhood, and loved by Him intensely as the spotless model of His own divine idea, its realisation: Mary has likewise another place in creation, she is its Queen. The earthly monarch, the mighty Assuerus, said to her he loved, the holy Esther, "Ask of me what thou wilt, and though it be the half of my kingdom, I will give it thee." But the gifts offered by the earthly king to his beloved were not so great as the gift of the Heavenly King to His chosen one. Earthly love is very generous; but Divine Love far, far, exceeds it. Divine Love is magnificent in its gifts, therefore

the object of God's own love, the lily of Jerusalem, the fair white rose, filling heaven with its fragrance, is placed by God as Queen of all creation, Queen of this earth, Queen of men, Queen of angels, Queen of heaven. Sweet Mother, thy children turn and salute thee. Blessed above women, for that thou hast found favour in the sight of God, rejoicing and praising Him for that He, the great King of Heaven, delighteth to honour thee. God gave Himself to thee. Sweet Mother, Jesus, Body and Soul, rested in peaceful repose within thy pure womb, and was wholly thine. Rapturous joy thrilled through thy soul as thy Immaculate Heart gave the Eternal Word His mortal life, His Precious Blood, and "the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt within thee." Great was thy joy, O Mary, for thou didst joy in the joy of thy God, of thy Son, and greater far than this joy was the joy of Jesus within thee, as to thy heart He spoke a voiceless word, and that word was *Mother*. God had nothing greater than Himself to give thee, Mary. He had no higher title to bestow than Mother of

God; but to honour thee still further He made thee Queen of heaven and earth. Jesus bestowed His possessions of heaven and earth upon thee. The Blessed Trinity delights to honour thee, and God's Holy Spirit has breathed upon our hearts, and they too are inflamed with desire of showing thee honour. Mother, what can we do for thee? If Mary were upon this earth now, and we could go and speak with her, she would tell us that, after the possession of Himself, God can give her nothing she more prizes than the possession of ourselves. Ponder and meditate upon that thought, and you will see that you must be corresponding with the Will of God, Who desires so to honour Mary by the oblation I am asking you to make of yourself to her. Likewise, I would have you remember that, though you can give Mary nothing more than the possession of yourself, to consecrate your body and soul to her, still you have something you may offer her after the example of Jesus. You may offer her the goods you have *at present*, and the goods you may possess *in the future*, the goods

not only of the body, but of the soul, your earthly and heavenly possessions, which you see must likewise be conformable to the will of God, who has made her Queen of heaven and earth.

I intend here to give a few instances of the holy people who have practised and advocated this devotion. In England Father Faber has spread the devotion in our own times, though it is not new in England, for we read that in the seventeenth century our people were remarkable for this devotion. To instance the opinion of that truly holy man (Father Faber), he says: "I cannot think of a higher work or a broader vocation for any one than the simple spreading of this devotion. Let a man but try it for himself, and his surprise at the graces it brings with it, and the transformations it causes in his soul, will soon convince him of its otherwise almost incredible efficacy as a means for the salvation of men, and for the coming of the kingdom of Christ." In his work upon the Precious Blood we find him again advocating this devotion, saying that "too much stress cannot be laid upon it in these times."

In the remarkable French book upon this devotion he translated into English, from which I have frequently drawn, we read of the antiquity of this devotion. We read as follows: "M. Boudon*, who died in the odour of sanctity, says, in a book he composed on this devotion, that it is so ancient we cannot fix precisely the date of its commencement. It is, however, certain that for more than seven hundred years we find trace of it in the Church. St. Odilon, the Abbot of Cluny, who lived about the year 1040, was one of the first who publicly practised it in France, as is remarked in his life." The book goes on relating the names of various saintly people who are well known to have practised this devotion. The Blessed Marino, brother to Cardinal Peter Damian, we find embracing this devotion in 1036, as is related by the Cardinal. Later on, we find in the life of the saintly Mother Agnes of Jesus, a Dominicaness of the convent of Langeac, that this devotion had been revealed to her from her very childhood, and that, in consequence

* A most saintly man, known in France as "l'homme de Dieu seul—the man of God alone."

of the peace and happiness she found in its practice, she was most earnest in inducing others to adopt it likewise. M. Olier, the founder of St. Sulpice, and many other priests, embraced the devotion through the advice of this holy woman. F. Simon de Roxas, of the Order of the Redemption of Captives, made this devotion popular in Spain and Germany, and obtained of Gregory XV., through the instance of Philip the Third, ample indulgences for all who practised it. Father de los Rios, the Augustinian, devoted himself with his friend F. Roxas to spread this devotion both by preaching and writing. He composed a thick volume called "*Hierarchia Mariana*," in which he treats with as much piety as learning, of the antiquity, excellence, and solidity of this devotion. The Theatin Fathers, in the seventeenth century, established it in Italy, Sicily, and Savoy. Father Stanislaus Phalacius, the Jesuit, increased his devotion wonderfully in Poland. Father de los Rios, in his work just cited, quotes the names of cardinals, princes, princesses, and dukes, who em-

braced this devotion. Cornelius a Lapide, as much recommended for his piety as for his profound erudition, having received a commission from several theologians to examine it, did so with great maturity and deliberation, and praised it in a manner which we might have expected from his well-known piety; and many other distinguished persons have followed his example. The Jesuit Fathers, always zealous in the service of our Blessed Lady, presented a little treatise on this devotion to the Duke Ferdinand of Bavaria, who was then Archbishop of Cologne. He gave it his approbation and permission to be printed, and exhorted all the parish priests and religious of his diocese to promote the devotion as much as ever they could. Cardinal Bérulle*, whose name is in benediction throughout France, was one of the most zealous in spreading this devotion in this country. He was persecuted on account of it, and accused by some misguided people

* So eminent for his union with Jesus, the peculiar union which naturally follows this devotion to our Lady, that he was said to have the gift of communicating this spirit of union with Jesus in a marvellous way to those whom he directed.

of novelty and superstition; and they made use, or rather it was the devil by their ministry, of a thousand subtleties to hinder his spreading the devotion. But that great and holy man met the objections contained in a libel they published against him by a short treatise, in which he most ably refuted them. He showed them that the devotion was founded on the example of Jesus Christ, on the obligations which we have to Him, and on the vows which we have made in holy Baptism. He has said many beautiful things on this practice, which can be read in his works.

M. Boudon, Archdeacon of Evreux, composed a book on this devotion, in which he says it is so ancient we cannot fix the date of its commencement. He likewise mentions the different Popes who have approved this devotion, the theologians who have examined it, the persecutions they have undergone and have overcome, and the thousands of persons who have embraced it without any Pope having ever condemned it. Indeed, we cannot see how it could be condemned without overturning

the foundations of Christianity. It is clear, then, that this devotion is *not new*; and that if it is not common it is because it is too precious to be relished and practised by all the world.

The holy writer continues: "The Holy Ghost disclosed to some of the saints this easy way, this 'Path of Mary,' by which we journey so gently and tranquilly. They entered it by a singular grace: for instance, St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bernardine, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis of Sales, and others. As for the rest of the saints, although they have all had devotion to our Blessed Lady, they did not all enter upon this way, and hence had to pass under and more dangerous trials." It was to one of Mary's own, who consecrated herself entirely to our Lady, and who was specially beloved by her, it was to this happy soul, the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, that our Lord disclosed the treasures of His Sacred Heart, and even made her heiress of them. He showed the pleasure He takes in our approaching Him with Mary's dispositions,

by instructing this holy nun that in her prayers she was to have the dispositions of our Lady when she presented herself in the Temple; that in receiving Holy Communion she should have the dispositions of our Lady at the Annunciation; and in hearing Mass she should be with Mary on Calvary. How faithfully the Blessed Margaret Mary kept her promises to our Lady, and how wonderfully she was united to our Lord, exemplifies what I endeavour to show you in this little work. You cannot be united to Mary without being united to Jesus; and the more you are united to Mary the closer will become your union with Jesus. I have now given sufficient examples to prove to you the *security* of the new step in life I ask you to take. It is well to be prudent upon entering any new path in life, particularly one that I tell you beforehand you cannot understand until you have entered it. I have given you the opinion of the Church, the example of saints and holy people. You may object, however, it is little practised, little known; but the same objections would apply to other devotions, for instance, to the Sacred

Heart. The devotion to the Sacred Heart was not generally known and practised until God's time came that it should be generally known and practised. That was the best time for it, the time when the Church had need of such a tender devotion.

Now when we are exposed to increased trials and temptations of all kinds, God gives us fresh succour, fresh assistance, in this increased devotion to His holy Mother. It is His will.* F. Faber writes: "If we are to believe the revelations of the saints, God is pressing for a greater, a wider, a stronger, quite another devotion to His Blessed Mother." We shall find this devotion according to the heart of God in the "Path of Mary." Pressed close to the sweet maternal heart of our Lady, we shall pursue our onward way amidst the dangers that surround us, calm, peaceful, happy. Oh! that this devotion were known. You say truly it is not common; would that it were! But the most precious gifts of

* Do not the words of the Church: "Thou, O Mary, hast destroyed all heresies throughout the world," seem to imply some future glory for our Lady? There being no such thing as past or future with God, the Church speaks—as did the prophets—of things as already past or passing, and have yet to come.

God are not common. They partake of the nature of God, and are hidden, till His servants, by the prayers He has Himself inspired, induce Him to reveal them. Pray, then, earnestly, pray perseveringly. Prayer will remove the obstruction that hinders the Holy Spirit revealing to you the hidden beauty of this "Path of Mary," if, as is not improbable, you may feel even a positive dislike to entering it. I pray you, by the Heart of Jesus, which beat for the first time within the peaceful womb of Mary, deprive not God of the glory you will give Him by refusing to imitate the Eternal Word in His subjection to Mary. Oh, you who thirst, come to the fountain! Truly, O Mary, does the Church call thee Fount of Love, for from the vast ocean of Uncreated Love thou didst receive and pour forth for us Love Incarnate, Jesus, our Life, our Love, of Whose fulness we have all received. Sion saw it and was glad; and her children will ever rejoice as they proclaim: Sweet Mother, thou art blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Blessed for endless ages and ages be Jesus, the son of Mary!

CHAPTER IV.

To enter properly upon this devotion, it should be performed thoughtfully; that is to say, though convinced how dear this devotion is to the Heart of God, how happy the sweet Maternal Heart of Our Lady is made by every fresh child it receives, still I do not ask you to embrace it without thought or preparation. I should advise you to begin at once the practice of offering each day your various duties, works, etc., to our Lady, and to strive to perform them in union with her. To ask likewise earnestly the light of the Holy Spirit, that you may better understand the new course of life you are about to enter upon; and to devote some time to a special preparation for what is indeed a solemn act, and one that, if performed in a proper spirit, will be one of the most important in your life. But to some inexperienced in the spiritual life I would here give a word of warning, which may likewise be well for all

to remember. Opposition follows good as its very shadow; therefore be prepared: the enemy of souls will not allow you to enter the "Path of Mary" without some struggle to hinder you. According to your disposition he will lay his snares. If you are indolent, you will probably intend to think upon this devotion another time, and that time never comes, and the hour of grace passes. There are others whose attention will be drawn to some other good work; the devil will transform himself into an angel of light, and, laying before them something that they will enter into heart and soul, they will find no time to continue reading these pages; they will be neglected, and the hour of grace will pass. It will be like the good seed in the parable of the Gospel. Likewise there are some who will be divided in their opinion. They will not quite like this devotion, or rather, though they may wish to, they will feel themselves repelled. To these I would say, pray, pray earnestly, fervently; and, trusting to the opinion of the good and earned whom I have cited to you, study the devotion more,

practise it, and for *eternity* will you be grateful to the good God, whose Holy Spirit responded to your prayers and led you into this "Path of Mary." Do not think your case is singular. The saintly Father Faber, whose opinion upon this devotion I have already given, was tried in the same way. In his "Life" we find him writing to a friend of the repulsion he felt to it, though afterwards he could write as I have told you; "he could not think of a higher work or a broader vocation than the simple spreading of this devotion;" and he modeled his own interior upon it.

In other cases souls will be tried by a variety of temptations; their attention will be distracted from the devotion; it may beget troubles of conscience; and hence, again, the golden opportunity may pass and not return. I pray this may not be the case with you who are now reading what I write from the heart of my Mother. Resist manfully the suggestions of the evil spirit. Pass not by what I write to you, as it may be you will journey through life with a heavy heart in the place of the joy-

ous one possessed by Mary's Own. There are many who wear a clouded brow, in whom you perceive an uneasy expression. You do not know the reason; they do not themselves; but in many cases it is through their having lost some great grace. Just as in the case of those souls who are striving to serve God, and are therefore susceptible to good impressions, when through their own fault they lose a grace, such as Benediction, or a Sacrament, or a Mass, they feel uncomfortable, they know not why. So with other souls, they have a constant irritability or feeling of unrest, or of dissatisfaction; there is something wrong with them, they know not what; but, as I have said, in how many cases it may be traced to the loss of some great grace. God's good providence had sent them a message; their guardian angel had brought it with joy; but the soul had turned a deaf ear to the heavenly message, and the grace was neglected, and, mayhap, has been given to another who would use it better. Therefore, dear reader, I pray you by the Blood of Jesus, shed with so much love for your

soul, lose not the grace now proffered you. Remember that one saint gives more glory to God than a whole nation of ordinary Christians. By this devotion, followed perseveringly, you will become a saint. And thus in this weary age of sin, you and those happy ones, Mary's Own, chosen in the midst of the darkness now covering the earth, will make bright spots well-pleasing to the eye of God. You will attract His great Mercy, and draw the Holy Spirit of Light to disperse the clouds of infidelity and the mists of error with which the world is now covered. Yes, Mary's Own will stand faithfully through the mystical crucifixion of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. When other members of Our Lord's Body will fall away, Mary's Own will pass scathlessly through the fiery ordeal, yet not without pain. And when the Church shall rise triumphant over her enemies, more glorious than ever, then will those happy ones, who, by a great grace, stood faithful in the midst of general desolation, sin, and misery, sing gladly, sing joyously, praising God with the jubilant

Heart of Mary on account of the great things He has done to them. Happy those who see that day, the glorious day of the resurrection of the Church!

It is not given to us to know God's times; but let us pray Him to hasten that glad time, the glorious period in the history of the Church, that the writings of holy people show us will most certainly come. And in the meantime let us, by increased fervour, and by embracing this most excellent devotion, prepare ourselves for the trials and temptations of the present era in which we are now living, when the Passion of Our Lord has recommenced in His Body the Church.

Having thus given a word of warning to prepare those who are interested in the devotion I am explaining, I will continue what I was advising concerning the best way to enter upon it. First of all, as in other important steps, it should be with the advice of your director. Prayer should precede both for yourself and your director; and, having consulted and taken his advice, it would be well to make a special

preparation. A holy writer counsels at least twelve preparatory days to empty yourself of the spirit of the world; followed by three more weeks—the first to be employed in endeavouring to know yourself; the second in endeavouring to know our Blessed Lady; the third to be employed in striving to know better our dear Lord; finally, a humble confession, followed by the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. Whilst Jesus is with you, ask Him to show you Himself how best to make the offering you desire to make of yourself to Mary, His Immaculate Mother. Ask Him that you may share in His feelings, and may offer yourself as entirely to our Blessed Lady as He did: then, whilst He is with you, deliver up yourself to her: cast yourself into the sweet Maternal Heart that gave Jesus His Life, His Precious Blood, and resolve henceforth to live no longer in yourself, *but in Mary*.

The oblation you make consists of course principally in the will; but still it would be well to make a solemn act according to the formula I shall give at the end. Hav-

ing done this, and commended yourself, body and soul, with all your goods, your spiritual and temporal riches, ask Mary to receive them and thank Jesus for the Holy Communion He has given you, and be sure of this, that never have you given Our Lord a better welcome. You may have had a great deal more sensible devotion, and so pleased *yourself* better; but you have not pleased our dear Lord so much, for you have welcomed Him, not with your own devotion, but with the devotion of the love of Mary. You have placed Him where He loves to be; and His Mother's mantle of immaculate purity has covered your vileness, which, if you truly knew yourself, would make you abhorrent to yourself. Our Lady's beautiful interior dispositions will supply for the selfishness of yours, which, if God's light were to shine and show to you for one moment only, would reveal to you what you could never forget. Mary will obtain for you, in the course of time, that you may see yourself a little as God sees you, and you will wonder how you dared to receive, or even speak to our Lord

(mass of sinfulness that you are!) before you came to Him in the company of Mary; before you knew the secret of hiding yourself in her and offering to Him the sweet Maternal Heart that gave Him life, in joining your dispositions and intentions to the desires and wishes that emanated from her pure and holy Maternal Heart. You may at first feel rather disturbed at this method of receiving Our Lord in Holy Communion. It will be but for a time. You must persevere in this union with our Lady *at all times*. You must never cease annihilating your own will *to live by hers*. Nature may feel a little this extinction of self; and by that you will discover you had been accustomed to be something before God, and that you had been used to indulge yourself even in what you thought you did purely to please God. This knowledge of self will come in time. If, before you had accustomed yourself to this union with our Lady, your own exceeding vileness had been in part shown to you, it might have rendered you pusillanimous; it might have discouraged you. Now that

you speak to Our Lord through Mary, as the knowledge of yourself grows upon you, you cover yourself more and more with her exceeding beauty, and ever offering her heart to Jesus, you thus supply for your own unworthiness. By this humility, by this constant acknowledgment of your own nothingness, and by this continual absence of self, you are beloved by Our Lord with a singular love, and your Communion give Him great delight. The Communion in which you give yourself to Mary, and offer yourself with Jesus to Mary, and offer to Jesus the Heart of His Mother, is the Communion in which Our Lord delights exceedingly, which most glorifies the Eternal Father, and enriches yourself and your neighbour with spiritual treasures.

The first step taken, you have to commence your new life in Mary with the cheerful, hopeful disposition God so loves to see. Having entered the "Path of Mary," you will not be troubled with the temptation you may have had before, viz., a doubt about its utility, yet you may still feel some discouragements; but remember

you are forming a solid spirituality within you, and that it will not be immediately you will experience the change that eventually you will discover has taken place within you, and that though graces abound and will descend upon you in abundance, you must co-operate. It will be particularly by constant acts of your will, by which you renounce yourself, by which you join your works to our Lady's, by which you renew your offering to her, that you will advance in true devotion to her and be more beloved by her. Not until you have well advanced in the "Path of Mary" by these means will God give you those great graces He has in store for those to whom, so to speak, He can safely give them, that is, to those who will not lose them, or take occasion from them to give way to vanity, by imagining themselves to be what they are not. Mary's Own will not lose or abuse grace, as do many others. All that is given them is given to her. Nor when well advanced in the "Path of Mary" can they attribute to themselves what they see, in the light of God's truth in which they

abide, is given because of Mary. "Non Nobis Domine," "Not unto us, O Lord," is their constant cry, as they receive from His divine hands gifts the saints have not received until after years of penance, and after constant struggles to attain the perfection, the union of God they arrived at, and with which He thus rewarded them. Mary's Own receive these same gifts, and their hearts are often too full to speak of the burning love which fills them, as, sinking into their own nothingness, they silently acknowledge these great gifts are given for the Immaculate Mother who will be honoured in her children by them, and they thank again and again the good God Who led them to this sweet way of Mary, where they found Him, and were united to Him in a manner they never thought was for them in this world, in a manner they had never even known or conceived, before they entered upon this immaculate way of Mary. It is to the honour of our Lady you should receive these great favours from God. Our Lady has your interest at heart far more than any earthly

mother has at heart her child's welfare, either spiritual or temporal.

We have around us plenty of examples which show us how mothers exert themselves, how earnestly they will strive that their children should make their way in the world; and how proud they are of them when they succeed. There are other examples of devoted mothers who have suffered for their children's sanctification, and whose whole ambition was to see them saints. There is the glorious example of St. Monica, whose life should be studied by all mothers. Is she not, and will she not be, for all ages, honoured in her son, St. Augustine? Again, are not parents oftentimes more pleased with a present given to their children than to themselves? Is it not a custom in the world to bestow gifts upon the children of their friends, with those who wish to show their love and respect for them? Thus then, our Lord, wishing to honour His Mother, will give, in the munificence of His divine power, unusual graces to those who are devoted, who are more than devoted to Mary, who

are entirely hers, and who desire to honour her with a spark of the desire that burns within His own Sacred Heart. Holy people have written that God intends to form for Himself wonderful Saints, who will surpass most of the other saints, as a great tree surpasses a little shrub; and that these great saints will be formed by Mary, "illuminated by her light, nourished by her milk, led by her spirit, supported by her arm, and sheltered under her protection." It is a pleasure Jesus can give Mary, and therefore a pleasure He will delight to give. Mary, the type, exemplar, and model of all motherhood, will indeed receive joy from these her devoted children, from those entirely hers, from those who place themselves docilely in her hands, to be formed and moulded to the likeness of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine calls our Blessed Lady "the mould of God"; the mould fit to cast and mould Gods. "And," continues the holy writer from whose work I have so often quoted, "he who is cast in this mould is presently formed and moulded in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in

him. Directors and devout persons, who wish to form Jesus Christ in themselves or in others, by different practices from this, I may compare to sculptors who trust in their own professional skill, ingenuity, or art, and so give an infinity of hammerings and chisellings to a hard stone or a piece of badly polished wood, to make an image of Jesus Christ out of it. Sometimes they do not succeed in getting anything like the natural expression of Jesus, either from having no knowledge or experience of the Person of Jesus, or from some blow awkwardly given, which has spoiled the work. But for those who embrace the secret of grace I am revealing to them, I may reasonably compare them to founders and casters, who have discovered the beautiful mould of Mary, where Jesus was naturally and divinely formed, and without trusting to their own skill, but only in the goodness of the mould, they cast themselves, they lose themselves in Mary, to become the portraits of Jesus Christ after nature. Oh, beautiful and true comparison! But who will comprehend it? I desire that you may,

but remember that we only cast in a mould what is melted and liquefied, that is to say, you must destroy and *melt down in yourself* the old Adam, to become the new one in Mary. In order that the soul may suffer itself to be led by Mary's spirit, it must first of all renounce its own spirits and its own proper lights and wills, before it does anything. For example, it should do so before saying or hearing Mass, and before communicating; because the darkness of our own spirit, and the malice of our own will and operation, if we follow them, however good they may appear to us, will put an obstacle to the spirit of Mary. We must deliver ourselves to the spirit of Mary to be moved and influenced by it in the manner she chooses. We must leave ourselves in her virginal hands, like a lute in the hands of a skilful player. We must abandon ourselves to her, like a stone one throws into the sea."

Dear reader, I have copied at length from the beautiful little book entitled, "True Devotion," by the Venerable Grignon de Montfort. It is to show you how to follow well the Path of Mary, after you

have taken the first step, by the voluntary surrender and oblation of yourself to her. Earnestly I desire you may attain to the spirit which it is the property of this devotion to engender. It is the spirit of the Infant Jesus, mingling with the spirit of Mary, in a way those only know who practise this devotion. You will ever possess that childlike spirit loved so by our Lord.

“Unless you become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”! and again, “Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Therefore you may see how, by becoming thus a child, you greatly please our Lord. Religious, by giving up their own will, and submitting in all things to their superiors, are well beloved, they are very dear to God; but to you who are not called to the religious life, there must be great comfort in the thought that you may become as much like little children as religious, for the love of God, make themselves. Yes, you will do so as much, yea more, than do the religious. You will, by the practice of this

devotion, *make a more complete renunciation of yourself* than they do, unless there were an order devoted to our Lady by the practice of this devotion, which would indeed do wondrous good, in the present time especially. “He that shall humble himself as this little child, shall be the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” So dear, so very dear are little children to God; therefore, become a little child by earnestly following this devotion, and endear yourself daily more and more to God. But if an ordinary good little child is so dear to God, how much more you, who, in imitation of the Divine Child Jesus, with full use of reason, become a little child, and thus resemble Him, Who with full use of reason entered Mary’s Bosom, and Whose wonderful intelligence was as great at the first moment of His Mortal Life as at its last.

Dear reader, when you understand this union with Jesus, like a little infant in Mary’s Bosom or on Mary’s Breast, you will indeed be happy. How you will love and venerate with our Lord the Mother-Heart of Mary, that gave Him life. It will

be your comfort, your refuge, your anchor of hope. When in great need for yourself or for others, you will pray with great confidence by presenting to Jesus the Heart of His Mother. You will tell Him He cannot refuse what you ask by and in union with the heart that gave Him His Human Life, the Precious Blood He so loves; and most certainly will that prayer draw His good and gentle spirit in a most efficacious manner. In the sorrows of life which all must have, and which indeed God uses for His favourite servants, to try their virtue, you will find yourself comforted as a child from its mother's heart. To no one could you pour out your trials as to Mary; from no one could you receive such sympathy, such assistance. Though "this virginal path is a path of roses compared with other paths," still there may be times when you will be called upon to suffer, and suffer perhaps intensely; but our Lady will so help you that you will glory in your tribulation, and pass through great trials so supported that you will sing your "Benedicite," as did the three Israelites in the

burning furnace. And also at those times when you feel no sensible comfort, but are called to a resemblance with the "Man of Sorrows," by a participation in His bitter cup of grief, and suffer in your degree in union with Him, *without comfort* as He suffered, who permitted not Himself the comfort He bestowed upon the martyrs, you will still find your support and strength in the great Mother of Sorrows, and obtain a new strength and support from the Maternal and compassionate Heart of Mary. You will bear your trials in a brave, manly spirit before the world, though alone in your times of quiet you will turn to Mary, and before your Mother, with whom you are ever a child, you will pour out your grief. You will have no need of self-control before her. Your overcharged heart may unburden itself freely, and it is better it should do so; Mary will be pleased at our childlike confidence. There is not a suffering of body or mind in which you will not be supported and receive succour from Mary; though, as I have said, it will not be always the sensible succour

received by the martyrs in their trials; but remember Mary's great wish is that you should resemble Jesus, and that when you are patiently suffering bitter sorrow, and your heart is pierced and lacerated with grief, and you have not the least sensible consolation, then to Mary you are inexpressibly dear, as she sees the eyes of God bent lovingly upon you, longing to caress you with the embrace of love, and to fill you, even on this earth, with that heavenly joy which those alone have who endure patiently the crosses laid upon them.

Those who suffer must remember that Jesus is our model in suffering, and in His tender compassion he has shown Himself in His sufferings and sorrows, not triumphant and joyous, but pale, heavy, weary, and even fearful; therefore we must remember, so long as we are not selfish in our sufferings, and do our duties to others, the merit of our cross is not lost if we are not so brave as we could wish, whether the suffering be a bodily or spiritual suffering, or, as often happens, both. Mary's Own are supported under crosses which, through

her, are made most sanctifying, but which, without the support they receive from her, they would probably sink under; and hence for all eternity they will rejoice in the sufferings which placed them so close to Jesus and Mary in heaven. Ah! it would be well to think of this oftener.

As I have said, the Church appears to have entered upon the time when she mystically represents the Passion of our Lord, and her members are unusually afflicted and tried; therefore the thought cannot be too often in your mind of the priceless value of suffering, of the short time the severest suffering can last, if it lasted without intermission through your whole life, which it does not. Meditate again and again, in union with the Mother of Sorrows, upon the value (we might almost say infinite value) of suffering, since it will procure an infinite reward. It will be well to remember, likewise, that suffering not only procures a closer union with God, and therefore greater happiness in heaven, but it likewise begets a greater happiness even on earth. You will taste a joy—you

who suffer till your soul seems sorrowful even unto death—not conceived by those who pass through life with but its ordinary cares. Suffering is the one thing we may glory in. Suffering borne patiently, borne as God wills, is a present we may offer in some way back to God, and be sure it will be a gift most pleasing to Him. All that we suffer we, of course, in our present fallen state deserve; but if God sees that in our hearts we are willing to suffer even undeserved suffering to please Him, to save our souls, He accepts that will, and our suffering is beautified to some resemblance to our Lady's. In the next chapter I mean to make a remark upon the sorrows of our Lady.

CHAPTER V.

The object of this work is to put the spirit of Mary in the place of our own selfish spirit, and to do this you must understand that spirit. Our Lady, being sinless, suffering was not necessarily entailed upon her as upon the rest of mankind, therefore the sufferings, the sword of sorrow which pierced her soul, the grief that broke her heart, were a pure gift she offered to God. She would not have been deprived of one of these dolours, which enabled her to offer to God a present entirely, so to speak, her own. To explain what I mean by that expression I must show you another of our Lady's interior dispositions, one she bestows in some measure upon "her own," upon those who have given themselves to her by the practice of this devotion. It is, in fact, the essential disposition of this devotion, and the one which renders those who possess it so inexpressibly dear to God. Mary ever possessed a clear and calm sense of

her position as a creature to God her Creator. Being a creature, she had no rights of her own. All that she did she did for God. Being created, she must be created to give honour and glory to God. There was nothing overstrained in the thoughts of Mary: *she was wonderfully simple*. This simple truth, that she never lost sight of, gave to her the wonderful charm, the humility for which God regarded His handmaid, for which He so loved His chosen one. Mary did not exaggerate. The thought she ever possessed, namely, that in giving herself entirely to God she did but do her duty, was a true and just one. She was, indeed, giving God what was due to Him, but there was one thing *she did not owe* to God. Being from the instant of her conception pure, immaculate and sinless, she did not owe God suffering; therefore her sufferings were an offering *above* what was required of her. They were a gift, a present she could offer, which she loved to offer to God. Now, let us look into ourselves, and see what correspondence there is within us to the beautiful (because truthful) interior disposition of our Lady

that I have mentioned. Our Lord has told us that when we have done all that is commanded us we are to say "we are still unprofitable servants." Now we do not do all that is commanded us, and yet we are very far from saying we are unprofitable servants.

Good people are hardly aware how far they are from this lowly disposition of our Lady. If they sounded their own hearts well they would discover that they thought they were doing a great deal more than was required of them, a great deal more than their duty. There is a *fussiness* about their actions, very, very different from the simple way our Lady had of performing all she did. I am well aware that these good people do not wish to make a fuss about what they do. They do not wish to think deliberately about it, but the very effort they make to avoid doing so shows that they are far from the disposition which Truth Incarnate has declared they should have, that is to say, that when they have done all they have been commanded they should confess they are unprofitable servants, for they have but done what they should do.

They are unprofitable, because we know what the word profit means, something over and above what is due. If you give a man simply what you owe him, he gains no profit by you. Now the practice of this devotion, by which we give ourselves to God by the hands of Mary, brings this view of ourselves, constantly before us. By the use of the free will which God has given us, we give our very thought, word, and work to Him. We have stripped ourselves entirely, and devoted ourselves, all we do, and even all we think, to Mary, that we may be disposed to the greater honour and glory of God. Mary had no reason to make a formal offering of herself to God. It was the first thought of her existence. It had ever seemed to her meet and just, right and reasonable. Mary did not consider that the entire oblation she had ever made to God of her whole being was at all a grand offering or sacrifice. No; she looked at it as right and reasonable. Her services to God she considered a "reasonable service." She did not consider herself in the least heroic or magnanimous, but as simply doing what it was right to do. Thus the

practice of this devotion keeps you in your proper place in creation. You are a work of God; you are therefore bound to give Him glory. You are bound to serve Him as He wishes. You differ from the inanimate works of God, in that you can choose not to serve Him as He wishes; but the most reasonable thing you can do is to fulfil the end of your creation, to choose to do so, as the inanimate works of God are obliged to fulfil the end for which they were made. You were made for God, therefore you should seek to live for Him alone, and not to live for yourself, any more than the sun shines for itself. By this devotion you aim a death-blow at self; *your actions no longer belong to you, you cannot even dispose of them.* The atmosphere in the "Path of Mary" is a very bad one for self-love. It cannot thrive there. The farther you advance in this path, the more you will see what a reasonable thing you have done by entering it, and by consecrating to God by Mary all that you are and all that you possess. You will see that you owe to God your entire service, without even thought of reward for what

you do, because He created you, and because you belong to Him. You will see that you owe Him still more, your entire service, because He redeemed you, because He laid down His life for you. You will more and more realize the words of the Apostle, that you are not your own, "you are purchased at a great price." Yes, you are purchased at the price of the Precious Blood of Jesus, and you belong to Jesus by right of that dear price He paid for you: however, because He loves the free offering of His creatures He allows, nay, He desires that you should come and make the offering, of your own free will, of what in reality already belongs to Him.

This devotion therefore puts you in a *truthful* position with God. You will realize that all you do is but what *you ought to do*, is but what you owe to God as His creature. As I have said, this was our Lady's constant thought. I likewise pointed out to you the difference between our Lady's sufferings and ours. Of course I am not speaking of their excess, but of the fact that she, a pure sinless creature, was exempt from all law of suffering, and

that therefore her sufferings possessed a value in the sight of God it is difficult for us to understand. Mary's sufferings were more entirely her own gift to God than aught else she offered Him. Now, if we give ourselves entirely to Mary, *she gives herself to us*. We are made partakers of her spirit, and are therefore able to make a present, to offer a gift to God, in some degree resembling Mary's. For instance, by the offering you have made of all your actions, even your sufferings are at the disposal of Mary. You are visited by some great grief, and though that sorrow might satisfy for yourself for many years penance in this world or in purgatory, yet, being at the disposal of Mary, she may use it as she pleases. It may serve to release a soul from purgatory, or it may obtain an act of contrition for a dying sinner, and thus save a soul from eternal punishment. (I must here remark again that we cannot dispose of the *merit* of our actions, that is to say, the eternal reward we shall obtain for them, the glory we obtain in heaven by them. But by giving away the satisfactory part of our actions

we increase our merit and our eternal reward in heaven.)

Thus you enter into the dispositions of our Lady, and God accepts your intention, the intention by which, though you had had the great happiness of being free from the least stain that could displease God, of never having committed the smallest sin, still you would suffer willingly and patiently for the pure love of God. Those who have learnt to suffer well have learnt a great lesson; and it is Mary's own who attain this most quickly. To copy from the French book already so often mentioned: "The servants of Mary carry these crosses with more facility, more merit, and more glory. That which would stay the progress of another a thousand times over, or perhaps would make him fall, does not once arrest their steps, but rather enables them to advance; because that good Mother, all full of the graces and unction of the Holy Ghost, preserves all the crosses which she cuts for them in the sugar of her maternal sweetness, so that they swallow them gaily, like preserved fruits, however bitter they may be

in themselves; and I believe that a person who wishes to be devout, and to live piously in Jesus Christ, and consequently to suffer persecutions and carry his cross daily, will never carry great crosses, or carry them joyously or perseveringly, without a tender devotion to our Lady, which is the sweetmeat and confection of crosses; just as a person would not be able to eat unripe fruits without a great effort, which he could hardly keep up unless they had been preserved in sugar."

In these trying days of the Church—when, as has been said before, unusual temptations abound, and trials of all kinds are assailing God's people,—in these sad times, when we see some whom we have respected and loved succumbing under those temptations and trials, and falling away from the Church, well may we fear for ourselves, well may we tremble when we see the great and good giving way; and wise shall we be if we seek that assistance that may hinder us falling and giving way likewise. It is Mary who will assist us in the hour of need. A saint compares her to a firm anchor, which holds fast, and hinders our

making shipwreck in the agitated sea of this world, where many persons perish simply through not being fastened to that anchor. "We fasten our souls," says he, "to thy hope as to an abiding anchor." Happy, then, a thousand times happy, are the Christians who are now fastened faithfully and entirely to her, as to a firm anchor. The violence of the storms of this world will not make them founder, nor sink their heavenly treasures. Happy those who enter into Mary as into the ark of Noe. The waters of the deluge of sin, which drown so great a portion of the world, shall do no harm to them. "This good Mother out of pure charity always receives whatever we deposit with her, and what she has once received in her office of depositary she is obliged by justice, in virtue of the contract of trusteeship, to keep safely for us." The word anchor is one indeed we may well apply to the Mother of Holy Hope. We use an anchor as an emblem of hope, and when was there ever such hope as that possessed by the Heart of Mary, even on Calvary, where it was as bright as it had been at

the (to human eyes) most glorious times to our Lord's life.

Now it should ever be remembered that hope is one of the theological virtues, and must be cultivated as carefully as faith and love. God loves us to hope in Him. "He will have mercy on us, according to our trust in Him"; and I would have you recollect that, though the essence of this devotion is that *we give our service to God because it is honest and just to do so, whether we are promised reward or not, because by right He deserves it from us, and because by offering our service by Mary makes it more pleasing to Him*; still Mary's Own look forward to a reward; they look and long for their home in heaven, but with the truthfulness engendered by this devotion they look forward to it and long for it as a pure mercy of God, which no service of theirs could have deserved or earned. Mary's Own walk more confidently, more hopefully, from this very knowledge, and their humble hope is well pleasing to God, and according to their hope it will be done to them. Ah, then come, hasten to Mary, and drink of her

milk, be filled with her spirit, renew upon this earth her virtues, supply for your own weak hope, faith and love, by her ardent hope, her firm faith, her burning love. Ask Mary to give you her heart, her Immaculate Virgin Mother Heart, that it may supply for your own sinful heart. Love that heart, consecrate yourself to it, make your home in it, and make it your constant endeavour to be actuated by all the holy desires, wishes, and prayers that emanated from it.

Let your sufferings, your actions, your words, your whole being, renew again on this earth the life of Mary. To do this you must study Mary. To study Mary you must enter her heart and observe its workings. In union, then, with Jesus love the heart of Mary, and that sweet Mother Heart will show you some of the love it has for you, and your own heart will overflow with joy, as you remember the dear Mother you have in heaven, loving you with the real human heart that on earth suffered so much for you. The Queen of Angels is your own Mother Mary. No one need fear or be dazzled at her glory, for

pointing to the heart pierced for us with the sword of sorrow, she speaks to us, saying: "Come all to me, I am your Mother." Will you refuse her invitation? Will you refuse to give yourself to her who, unworthy though you are, desires so to possess you for her own? Oh! no! already you must have resolved that, if there is anything you can do for Mary, you, by the grace of God, will do it. It will cost you a little trouble, perhaps a little effort, but you will not mind that to please your heavenly Mother; you will gladly exercise a little extra self-restraint for the love of Jesus, who desires you should thus honour His Mother; you will not think it much to seek more earnestly to destroy your self-love, when by doing so you give glory to the ever adorable and resplendent Trinity. Then enter this "Path of Mary," and walk faithfully therein. If you acquire the habit (which may be a little trouble at the first) of constantly renouncing your self-love, your self-will, and living by the will of Mary, all you do will be inexpressibly dear to the Most High God. By being offered by the hands of Mary your prayers and

sacrifices cannot be refused; otherwise God might see your own will in them, and reject them, as He rejected the prayers of His people ages gone by, because He found their own will in them.

When you have an offering to make to God, says S. Bernard, be sure to offer it by the hands of Mary, if you would not have it rejected; and, again, by being offered by Mary, your actions acquire a merit they would never have of themselves. Constantly, then, renew your offering to Mary, by an act of your will, by a word or a look to Mary. Constantly remind yourself that you live to do what she wishes you to do in her place. Be earnest in acquiring the priceless treasures of God's grace by all the means you can, because by doing so you add to the store you have deposited in the hands of Mary; and remember, above all, there is one thing you can do now that Mary cannot—that is, *suffer*. Oh, then, suffer in her place if you would be one of the favourites of heaven, if you would be one of those upon whom the loving eyes of Jesus rested in His death agony, if you would be one of those who

gave comfort to that sadly grieved Heart agonizing on the cross. If you would be loved with a special love by our dear Lord, imitate the patient, gentle Mother, who stood with breaking heart at the foot of the cross, joining her tears with the Blood that was there shed with such ardent love that souls might be saved; imitate that sweet Mother, who in the midst of suffering such as no other purely human heart has ever known, thought not of her own grief but as a means of invoking what Jesus drew upon this world, the mercy of God, that beautiful attribute of God which, adorable as are all the divine attributes, we inhabitants of a fallen world must ever love with a peculiar love, and which it is the office of our own Mother Mary (the Mother of Mercy) to reflect. Let us, then, in time of suffering be unselfish, and knowing that it is the time when we can pray most efficaciously—for the prayer of a suffering heart has wondrous power with God—let us, united to the compassionate Maternal Heart of Mary, join in offering the Precious Blood, the outpoured Life of Jesus, and beg the mercy of God, and that

His Holy Spirit may descend upon the Church, the Spouse of Christ, now persecuted as was her Lord.

Pray, then, for the members of the Church whom Mary sees to have greatest need. Pray for the world as Mary did on Calvary; and the united prayers of Mary's Own, united and therefore strong before God, unselfish, breathing but the wish and will of Mary, ascending before God as the breath of Mary, which ever ascended from this earth to His heavenly throne as sweetest incense, will be acceptable in His sight. As Mary's heart, as she stood at the foot of the Cross, echoed the cry of the Precious Blood shed upon that Cross, so let our hearts echo the cry of our Mother, and lose themselves within the recesses of that motherly heart, and be filled with the pure love with which it is filled, so that our voices may join the prayer and sacrifice of Calvary, and move God's great mercy to grant a renewed outpouring of the priceless gifts of His Holy Spirit upon the Church in general, upon ourselves, and upon the whole world. At Mass especially, whilst the Precious Blood is presented in

the chalice, during the most solemn time of Mass, Mary's Own should be present in her place. Their occupation should be the same as hers on Calvary. What was Mary's occupation there? Think, there may be something you have never thought of. On the altar there is the same, identically the same, Precious Blood that was shed during the time of the Passion, that was trampled under-foot, outraged and insulted, until the Immaculate Heart of Mary, sickening at the sight of this unspeakably precious object of her adoration thus contemned, would fain have poured out her whole being in reparation to the outraged majesty of God. Knowing as we can never fully know, how inexpressibly dear is the Price of our Redemption in the sight of the Eternal Father, the ineffable complacency with which the Holy Ghost loves the Precious Blood, the mortal life of Jesus, then make your act of reparation; for it is a solemn duty we people of this earth, who by our sins have thus outraged what is so unspeakably adorable, the Blood of Christ, owe to It. Even to this day the same insults are offered to It,

though in another way, by those who reject the sacraments, trample on the laws of God, and ridicule the truths of holy religion. The Precious Blood was shed for all men, but the greater number spurn it. Mary's Own bring before Jesus the Heart of His Mother, and thus make reparation to Him whilst they join its prayer of petition for mercy, mercy even for those who treat it so sacrilegiously. Let us, then, assist at Mass in union with Mary on Calvary, and join, as the angels did with their Queen, in adoring the Precious Blood, outraged and insulted by those for whom it was shed with so great love.

What glory will God receive when this devotion will have spread throughout the world, when in every place where Mass is said there are some who take Mary's place, and assist as Mary assisted on Calvary; when souls invite our Lord in Holy Communion to take His repose where He so loves to be—namely: in the bosoms of Mary's Own! When numbers of God's people are striving in all their actions, in all their prayers, in their whole conduct, to renew again upon this earth the life of

Mary, what glory will not be given to God! You who are now reading what I write out of love for you, whom God so dearly loves, I would pray you to be in earnest; think not you have done all I recommend, by the one act of consecration which I ask you to make, and by which you enter this "Path of Mary." No; indeed, you have not. You have taken a great step; you have done your soul incalculable service; but according to your advancement in this path will be the benefit that will accrue to your soul from it, and the farther you advance the greater beauties of this sweet way to heaven will be disclosed to you. How are you to advance? you may ask. I answer you, By a more and more constant renunciation of yourself, by more and more constant little acts by which you renew your offering to Mary. Without laying stress upon sensible feeling, still if at any time you have the consciousness of your soul growing dry within you, look into yourself, and see whether, perhaps without your having perceived it, you have been relying upon some good quality within you, and have forgotten to approach our

Lord through Mary. You must ever remember that your best dispositions, good as they may be, as they must be if they are the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul, must be covered and surmounted by the dispositions of Mary if you wish greatly to please our Lord, and give great glory to the Blessed Trinity. You must likewise approach Mary by Jesus, if you would possess the choicest love of her Mother-Heart. These two dispositions are one, though at present you cannot perhaps perceive how that can be. The spirit of Jesus and Mary was one. Their souls were never disunited. Thus you will possess the one spirit that animated those two lives, and renew in yourself those two lives. At one time you will rest with Jesus on Mary's breast; at another, bending over Him, you will fold Him with her close to yourself. The more you are united to Mary, the closer will be your union with Jesus. The farther you advance in the "Path of Mary," the nearer will our Lord draw you to His loving heart.

CHAPTER VI.

I have now indicated to you some of the beauties of the "Path of Mary." I have striven to induce you to enter therein; but remember, I have but shown you, in a brief way, its beauties. Though whole volumes were written upon this devotion to Mary, still the subject would not be exhausted. This "Path of Mary" is, indeed, a path. It is not an open plain from which all the beauties of the surrounding landscape can be seen, but it is rightly called a path, and it is one that is constantly disclosing fresh grandeurs, hidden splendours, that delight and surprise the traveller. I who write this, and who have for years been walking in this path, saw not *last* year what I see *this*; and if another year finds me still walking therein—which God grant—I shall have discovered beauties in it I see not now. Of another thing those who read this may be sure, it is that if they walk faithfully in this path, they will not

look back with regret upon the past. They will prefer the present. They may hardly know why, but so it will be. Year after year will go by, and if they are persevering in this sweet way of Mary each year will be to them happier than the last; though they may have passed through great trials and sufferings, they will still be more satisfied with their present state. They will enjoy a delightful holy liberty, and carry a wonderfully light heart, which it is the effect of this holy liberty to produce. A devout servant of God, who from the age of seven had walked in this path, was vouchsafed a vision in which S. Cecilia, appearing to her, spoke of the happiness of these favoured ones of Mary, and gave but one reason for it, and that was that they enjoyed "true liberty." It is, indeed, a great gift; almost a return to the happiness we should have enjoyed in a state of innocence, to the liberty we should have possessed if the slavery of sin had never entered into the world. Mary's Own, who have advanced in this devotion to her, are delivered from a certain kind of restraint which may be observed in good people.

The farther they advance in this path the more fully do they possess this gift of holy liberty, and all the other gifts I have enumerated; and they, feeling this, would no more think longingly of some past time of their lives—as is the way with so many—than a traveller, who was hastening to his home, would look back to the earlier stages of his journey and wish to commence them again, and not rather rejoice he had advanced so far to his desired end. Shall I repeat here the old familiar saying, that we should all be as travellers hastening home? We should all be looking to this one end, this one thing to be desired above all things—heaven, our home in God, where “we shall live within the arms of God and lie upon His breast; where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” This is what we should desire. It is according to the order of God that all things should seek their ultimate end. We should desire heaven, as the glorious saints desire that we should be partakers in their happiness. We should wish for heaven as Mary wishes that we should possess it with her. No earthly mother

could be so eager for her children's good as is Mary. I am reminded of the account you may have heard of a mother whose little infant had toddled from her side to the brink of a cliff. The mother, in terror, sees the danger of her child, and by a wonderful instinct bares her breast, and the little one, running towards it, is saved. Such, it seems to me, is Mary's conduct with us, her children, in these perilous times. She sees us in the midst of dangers we are not ourselves aware of, and, opening her breast, points to the dear Mother-Heart, beating with love for us, and calls us to it as a port of safety,* that we may be sheltered from the unknown dangers by which we are surrounded. Happy, then, those who put themselves entirely into her hands! Great is the joy they give the adorable Heart of Jesus, that tender Heart that beat in anguish in the Garden of Olives, when Jesus watched the future career of His children, and, trembling and fearful, saw their danger. Ah! be sure of this, you who are Mary's Own, in that dread mo-

* The Holy Father has granted 300 days' Indulgence each time the following aspiration is repeated: "Sweet Heart of Mary be my salvation."

ment Jesus saw you, and was comforted by the sight. The vision of you favoured ones was with Him through the whole of His Passion, giving Him joy in the midst of the sorrow that was crushing His Soul even unto death. Again, then, you should desire heaven to give Jesus that joy, that now unbounded joy, by which He rejoices in the possession of those whom He purchased by the opening of His Sacred Heart and the shedding of His Precious Blood. Again, you should desire and yearn to possess heaven, since God Himself desires you should thus desire it. "Deus sitit sitiri," "God thirsts to be thirsted for." Enter, then into the way of salvation, "*the Path of Mary*," that you may possess the end for which you were created, God.

DAILY ACT OF CONSECRATION OF MARY'S OWN.

My Queen! My Mother! I give thee all myself; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, my

ears, my mouth, my heart, myself, wholly and without reserve.

I give myself entirely to Jesus, by delivering and consecrating to thee my body and soul, my goods, both exterior and interior, and even the *impetratory and satisfactory part of all my good actions, past, present, and future*, leaving to thee the entire and full right of disposal of me, without exception, and according to thy good pleasure, and to the greater glory of God in time and eternity.

* “My Queen! My Mother! I give thee all myself; and to show my devotion to thee, I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, ears, mouth, heart, myself wholly and without reserve.

“Wherefore, O loving Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, defend me, as thy property and thine own possession.

“My Queen, my Mother, remember I am thine own. Keep me, defend me as thy property, thy own possession.”

* 100 days' Indulgence, once a day; 40 days every time the ejaculation “My queen! my Mother!” etc., is said under temptation; and a Plenary Indulgence once a month on the usual conditions.—From the *Raccolta*.

Letter to The Children of Mary.

Dear Children of Mary :

You will see, through the few little works that I have written, more for you in the world than for those few who at present have been enabled to leave it, something of that kind of interior life at which we who are in the convent are aiming. You will then strive to attain this interior spirit. You will strive to begin your novitiate in the world, keeping in the company of our Blessed Lady, who will be very near you, and assist you in wonderful ways; she will be your Novice-Mistress, your Novice-Mother; she will herself train more particularly those who entirely trust and rely upon her.

You can yourselves practise the religious virtues to a certain degree; you can esteem

them; you can endeavour to acquire a spirit of poverty and obedience; you can practise chastity; you can daily thank God for the grace He has vouchsafed to you in giving you an esteem of the holy virtue so loved by your Mother, preferred by her, indeed, to the grand dignity and happiness of being Mother of God. She has many of her children, canonized by the Church, who, in the midst of a sinful world, were pure and chaste, shining as bright stars in a dark atmosphere. See SS. Catherine, Cecilia, Agnes, and numberless others. So think not, dear children of Mary, that you cannot be saints in the world as well as in the cloister; think not you cannot be as much her very own as those of her little company; think not that you cannot be spouses of Jesus, even though you may never be able to become nuns. We can be united with Jesus on the cross everywhere, and union of heart with Jesus makes us His spouses; the love and practice of poverty and suffering unite us to Him really. True union with Him, indeed, is forming our interior to a resemblance to His, without which the exterior resemblance would

be little; and the three vows by which we make profession of being consecrated spouses of Jesus would not make us so if not corresponded with interiorly as well as exteriorly.

I hope, in course of time, to bring out a little work, "Mary's Conferences to Her Loving Children," which may be a help to you in the world, who cannot hear the lectures, &c., given in a religious house; and though these Conferences were intended for inmates of a religious house, nevertheless many of Mary's Own, even those who are not aspiring to the religious state, may find that these Conferences will be an assistance to them in their spiritual life, and be likewise a help to them in their domestic life, teaching them that true charity, which is the foundation of all holiness, which is necessary in every state of life, and which the Mother of Charity, the Mother of fair love, so wishes to instill into her children. "Let every spirit praise the Lord." Yes, there are many ways of serving God, many various states of life, many devotions, but they all run into one, in that all need love, all tend to love, and all can

alone please God by love. If we choose one state more than another, is it not that we may better love God? If we could love Him better in one state than another, should we not prefer the state in which we could love Him best? If one soul could love Him better in the married state, is it not better for that soul? And if we can love Him better by giving our hearts and bodies to Him alone, should we not pray for grace to choose that state?

We will all of us, who belong specially to Mary, be united in whatever state of life we may be. And we will all remember this important truth: it is not the state of life that will perfect us, but the *perfect fulfilling* the duties of that state, that will render us pleasing in the sight of God; so that if Mary's child in the world more perfectly fulfils the duties of her state than Mary's child in the convent, she will be more pleasing to Mary and her Divine Son, than His consecrated spouse who is not fulfilling the duties of her high calling. We, then, who are banded together to honour Mary will unite; though we may be in opposite parts of the world, though we may

be in totally different states of life, we are all Mary's own, priest or layman, nun or wife, she loves all, she wants all. We all love her, we all want to please her; we will therefore pray according to our Mother's heart; we will join the prayer of that dear Mother; we will pray according to Mary's intentions; we will strive to be more fervent, that we may be better heard; we will strive to be unselfish, that we may be more like our Lady, and live to renew on earth, in whatever state of life we may be in, the sweet, simple, hidden humble life of Mary.

Persevere in Mary's sweet way. Put yourself on one side. Let us be united in prayer; let us be united in Mary's intentions; let us be united with one another. We have been spoken of as a spiritual society: we had hardly intended this; but God seems to have intended that the Little Company commenced at Hyson Green should be the centre of a far larger company, a united body, bound together to renew on earth Mary's simple life of love, her humble hidden life. The world has its confraternities; they are bound together

for certain objects, many of them very charitable ones. There is a certain bond between the members: they will all help one another in time of distress, and when abroad they are pleased to meet one another, even though strangers. Now, with Mary's Own let this shine still more strongly. Let it be said of them, as of the Christians of old, "See how these Christians love one another!" Let there be a great bond of love between us all: for myself you can see how strong this feeling is, from the fact that all my little works are written for you in the world. I have as yet published nothing for those in the convent. My heart follows you in the world, praying for you, loving you, suffering for you, longing to hear you are persevering in Our Lady's Path, advancing in it for the glory of Jesus, her honour, and your own good, your own happiness.

Many of you may have already begun to taste that peace, Mary's peace, which cannot be spoken of. Some may yet be in the commencement of that new life, not yet accustomed to it, not yet advanced enough to taste the unspeakable sweet-

ness and joy that is awaiting them as they advance farther, that peace and happiness which Mary gives her most faithful followers, as a reward, as a sign of love, and likewise as a preparation for great crosses. Let us then, when walking in our Mother's company, so closely that we almost feel her sweet presence, almost seem to see the loving eyes bent upon us, and almost touch her hand, when our hearts are burning within us, as the disciples' when they walked with Jesus to Emmaus; then let us not forget that at times dark clouds will obscure the sunshine, rough winds, strong tempests rise up, even in Mary's Path, and hinder our walk with Mary being as heretofore; but we must recollect that Mary is with us, though we know it not. Jesus was with the disciples in the boat, apparently asleep when the storm so affrighted them; but He was guarding and watching, though apparently so careless of the danger. Jesus was very near to the disciples whilst walking to Emmaus, and they felt not His presence immediately; they journeyed with Him some distance, they recounted their grief, and then He spoke to them and com-

forted them. Let us be hopeful if at times we walk sorrowfully, wearily; if at times our hearts are sad. Mary is near; she will come and resolve our doubts, she will comfort our poor weak hearts, she will sustain us on our way, she will manifest herself to us, sweet Mother that she is, and then, when strengthened for our onward journey, seemingly perhaps leave us to ourselves again for awhile.

If any of you, dear sisters, are now suffering, if any have times of intense grief, take heart, lift up your eyes to heaven, for Jesus is smiling upon you, your patient endurance is dear, very dear to Him, your life is beautiful in His sight. Common-place may be the circumstances of your lives, and yet before God they shine with golden splendour.

There is not an action of the day which is spent in Mary's company which is not pleasing to God; thoughts gradually grow heavenly, wills become firmly cemented to God's Will; God is seen everywhere; the conversation of Mary's Own is truly in heaven. It is well worth the putting ourselves to some trouble to obtain the grand

result that we are so dear to God, so pleasing in His sight, that He Himself tells us we are as the apple of His eye. He has graven us in His hands, our walls are ever before His eyes. How He loves us: dear God, how He loves us! He has made but one Immaculate, one unspeakably lovely Virgin, Mary the Mother of His Son, but He would have her life renewed in her children. He would have virgins striving to imitate His spotless one as far as may be. He would have them empty of self. that His adorable Self, His Spirit, may replenish them with grace, and enable them to form Jesus within them. Some of you look forward to being spouses of Jesus. Like S. Agnes, the child-spouse of Jesus, you have said you can have no lover but Christ. God's Spirit has begun this good work, and will perfect it if you are faithful.

One thing all Mary's Own must be, and that is mothers. Yes, though virgins, we must be mothers. We must give a new life to our Lord within our souls; we must be mothers, in that by our prayers, sufferings, and works, we give life to numberless souls

who, but for our exertions on their behalf, would never taste eternal life, but would instead be buried in the everlasting death of hell. Yes, God in His goodness has given us the means of becoming more like our Mother Mary than we could have been by simply embracing a life of virginity. Mary is the type, exemplar, and model of God's beautiful conception of Mother. A mother's office is to give life, and Mary's children, who by vow of virginity cannot be mothers of the natural life of the body, must be mothers by giving, through the Precious Blood of Jesus, supernatural life to souls. Yes, many are the children of the barren, rather than of her who hath a husband.

How happy we are! how happy we are! we have priceless treasures at our disposal, Masses, Sacraments, Benedictions, for those who have time to attend the offices of the Church; and all can attend spiritually if they cannot be present bodily. There are the graces attached to our daily works when performed in conformity to the Will of God; and, indeed, our daily works are turned into gold when we perform them in

the simple spirit of our Lady, that union with the Will of God which made her perform her humble duties so perfectly, with the same perfection, indeed, with which she would have performed the duties of a *seemingly* grander state on earth if God had placed her in a, to worldly eyes, more noble station of life. There is the constant lifting up of our hearts to God, which when it is filled with love, is a constant prayer. There is that loving desire, that wish to perform His Holy Will, without eagerness, but that peaceful wish to do in all things the Will of God on earth, as the blessed do in heaven, which was the perfection of God's Immaculate One on earth; who on earth was one of the blessed whom all nations were to call blessed, not because she was the Mother of God, but because she heard the word of God and kept it. "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck," cried a woman in the crowd to Jesus, and His Heart bounded with joy as He heard His Mother's praise, and He still more increased it when He answered, Yes, "Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God

and keep it." Mary kept all His words in Her heart; she alone of all His creatures never forgot His word, never forgot Himself: she alone perfectly fulfilled the will of her Creator. She lived one long life of love for God, and therefore, though the Queen of Martyrs, she was the happiest of all the beings whom God in His love has brought into existence. Next to the Human Soul of Jesus, Mary's was the gladdest, and she will make ours so too if we deliver ourselves docilely into her hands, keeping nothing back, but saying once for all, and continuing to say, "I am thine, dear Mother, all thine." Then a moment will come when Jesus, stretching His dear stigmatized hands towards us, will say, "Thou art Mine, beloved Soul, all Mine," and He will draw us nearer, nearer to Himself, and we shall rest our weary heads on His sacred breast, and feel the beatings of that loving Heart, and raising our eyes timidly to His face, see the eyes of Jesus, God and Man, bent upon us with that look of unutterable sweetness and love it were worth a long life of sorrow and self-denial to obtain. Let us now beg from our Mother

the grand gift to persevere in her sweet way, by which surely we shall live noble lives on earth, and obtain that happiness in the next world which God has promised to those who have faithfully followed and loved Him in this.

We shall see our Mother there, we shall see one another; we shall love then as we have never loved here, and we shall know then what we cannot know here—*how we are loved*. Ah, it is a happy thought; it is a fresh, joyous thought every day of our lives, we are loved, loved intensely, loved passionately by those whose love it should so delight us to think of. Glorious saints love us, holy angels, our own Mother Mary loves us with her burning heart of love. The God Man, Jesus, our Brother, Lord, our Love and Life! His Sacred Heart never ceases in heaven, or in the tabernacle on earth, Its throbs of passionate love. The Blessed Trinity Itself burns with love that God alone can possess, burns with inexplicable love for the little creatures created by Him for an endless eternity of love with Himself. We thank Thee, dear God, for the power Thou hast given us of loving.

We would love more and more. We cannot see Thee to manifest our love as we would wish, but we see those whom Thou lovest; we will show our love to them. We will do for them what we would do for Thee, dear Jesus, if Thou wert now visible on earth. We will love all, dear Lord, we will wish well to all, we will never allow ourselves any thought, word, or deed to the prejudice of any one, for we would not hurt Thee, Jesus, and thou hast put Thyself in the place of our neighbour to us. If we wound him we shall wound Thee. This we will never do. We will live for Thee and Thine. We will die for Thee and Thine. This may I do, sweet Jesus, in whose poor heart Thou hast lit a spark from Thine Own, and who joys in the joy of Thy Sacred Heart in the possession of those simple unselfish souls devoted wholly to Thee, since devoted to Thy Mother; devoted to Mary, since they are so closely united to Thee; they must needs have Thy devotion to her, and seek to be united to her as nearly as Thou wert.

May the benediction of heaven rest upon them now and for ever. May the Eternal Father bless those, who, imitating the Son

of His Love, have made themselves Mary's very own. May the Holy Spirit dwell ever in delighted possession of the hearts possessed by Mary. May the angels and saints proclaim them blessed together with their sweet Mother; and for ever, as the eternal ages roll on and on, may Mary's happy ones chant their hymn of glad thanksgiving that the sweet way of Mary had been made known to them, and they had had grace to choose the better part, the most perfect part, the part, the path, indeed, which Jesus and Mary desire that all should take in imitation of them. Yes, Adam and Eve sinned and fell, and God repented He had made man; but behold, the new creation of God, far exceeding the old. Behold Jesus! behold Mary! The God Man; the Immaculate Virgin-Mother. Be like to them, follow them, imitate them.

O God, heavenly Father, God, whose plenitude of riches for men is beyond our measure, open still more Thy bountiful Heart to us. Pour upon us more and more like Thyself, our own most merciful, generous God. Thou Who so lovest to give, give; God give to us that we may give to Thee. Give to us. We have given our-

selves to Mary, Thy chosen one; we have given to her all that we have, or shall ever have, therefore give, and thus honour her whom Thou delightest to honour. Most loving God, we know Thou wilt give, but we know not how we shall receive and use Thy gifts. Mother, daily and hourly we will renew our offering to thee of all we receive, that God's treasures may not be lost, but may increase and fructify as He so desires; and that God's paternal creating love overflowing He may rejoice, and looking upon the earth, made beautiful by faithful copies of Jesus and Mary, likenesses of His Incarnate Word, He may again proclaim it good and lovely in His sight, and lavish more and more plentifully those choice graces He reserves for His most favoured souls.

Dear ones of Jesus and Mary, may you be of the number of those who, living in close union with God on earth, will be in still far, far closer union with Him for ever in the never-ending peace and bliss of heaven.

The daily prayer of the one who so loves you in our dear Mother's heart,

MARY.



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